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Pindar and the Enigmatic Tradition

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Pindar and the Enigmatic Tradition

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Abstract

Pindar and the Enigmatic Tradition

by

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As an object of study, Pindar and riddles may seem a natural union of text and subject matter, since Pindar's poetry is often judged by modern critics to be obscure. However, the notion of Pindar's obscurity, a late critical development, says more about our own poetic tastes than the about cultural systems which produced epinician poetry. Contra Aristotle, speaking enigmatically in the ancient world did not constitute a lack or excess of signification but rather a specific and often successful mode of communication that was performed and enjoyed by many different kinds of Greek speakers. Therefore, by describing the Pindaric text in relation to the tradition of speaking enigmatically, my aim is not to "solve" the text. Rather, this study aims to further the valuable work of describing two kinds of associative networks in epinician poetry: logical structure and social meaning. As regards the first, I argue that enigmatic speech in Pindar is marked speech, which means that the text actively engages in signaling to the performance audience that it is enigmatic by devices such as narrative framing, signpost words, tropes such as the "cognitive road," and the construction of an enigmatic speaker. On the second, I follow recent approaches to Pindar's poetry which take seriously the social embeddedness of choral lyric. Thus I argue that the performance of enigmatic speech stages a series of dialogues: literary (Ch. 1), elite (Ch. 2), and communal (Ch. 3). Overall, the study advances a view of enigmatic speech, not as obscurity or window dressing, but as an expressive mode of speech that put diverse texts, individuals, and communities in conversation with one another.

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Conventions and Abbreviations

For Pindaric quotations, I follow the text of Snell-Maehler (S-M), except where noted. For Pindar's paeans, I follow Rutherford (Ruth). For Bacchylides, Maehler (Bacchyl. below). For Heraclitus, I follow Kahn's edition (Kahn), though for easy reference, I give the corresponding number in Diels-Kranz (D-K).

Greek names are usually Latinized according to familiarity (so, "Aeschylus") but other times maintain their Hellenized spelling (e.g., "Iamos") according to an arbitrary scheme.

Abbreviations for authors and works follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th edition), with the following exceptions. Pindaric citation uses only a single letter for the games (O. = Olympian; P. = Pythian; N. = Nemean; I. = Isthmian) followed by Alexandrine ode number. Pindaric scholia citation uses Σ + ode number and Drachmann's line number. For the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, I use *HMerc*; and the *Greek Anthology* (*Anth. Pal.*) is *AP*. Other abbreviations are as follows:

Bacchyl.	H Maehler, ed., <i>Bacchylidis Carmina cum Fragmentis</i> (Leipzig, 1970 (¹⁰ 1992))
Bernabé	A. Bernabé, ed., <i>Poetae Epici Graeci. Testimonia et Fragmenta. Pars II: Orphicorum et Orphicis Similium Testimonia et Fragmenta</i> (Munich, 2004-2007)
D-K	H. Diels and W. Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin, ⁶ 1951-1952)
<i>FGrH</i>	F. Jacoby, ed., <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin-Leiden, 1923-58). Part 4 ed. G Schepens (Leiden, 1998)
G-P	A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, eds., <i>The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams</i> , 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1965)
Kahn	C. Kahn, <i>The Art and Thought of Heraclitus. An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary</i> (Cambridge, 1979)
Lightfoot	J.L. Lightfoot, ed., <i>Hellenistic Collection: Philotas, Alexander of Aetolia, Hermesianax, Euphorion, Parthenius</i> (Cambridge, Mass., 2009)
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, R. Mackenzie, eds., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , revised and augmented throughout by H.S. Jones. With a Supplement (1968) (Oxford, ⁹ 1940, repr. 1990)
M-W	R. Merkelbach and M.L. West, eds., <i>Hesiodi fragmenta selecta</i> (Oxford, ³ 1990)
Nauck	A. Nauck, <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (Leipzig, ² 1889)
Perry	B.E. Perry, ed., <i>Aesopica: A Series of Texts Relating to Aesop or Ascribed to Him or Closely Connected to the Literary Tradition that Bears his Name</i> , vol. 1 (Urbana, 1952)

- PLF E. Lobel and D. Page, eds., *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1955)
- PMG D.L. Page, ed., *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962)
- Ruth I.C. Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans. A Reading of the Fragments with A Survey of the Genre* (Oxford, 2001)
- Samm. V. F. Bilabel, ed., *Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, vol. 5 (Heidelberg, 1938)
- Slater W.J. Slater, ed., *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin, 1969)
- S-M B. Snell and H. Maehler, eds., *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis, i. Epinicia* (Leipzig, 1987, repr. 2008) OR
H. Maehler, ed., *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis ii. Fragmenta, Indices* (Leipzig, 1989, repr. 2008)
- Turyn A. Turyn, ed., *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis* (Krakow, 1948)
- Voigt E.-M. Voigt, ed., *Sappho et Alcaeus. Fragmenta* (Amsterdam, 1971)
- W M.L. West, ed., *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, 2 vols. (Oxford, ²1989-92)
- Σ A.B. Drachmann, ed., *Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1903-19)

Introduction: An Enigmatic Tradition

Δῆλον δέ ὥς καὶ ἀσάφειαν ἐπιτηδεύεται ἐν πολλοῖς...

It is obvious that [Pindar] practices obscurity in many ways¹...

(Eustathius, *Prooemium commentarii in Pindari opera* 6)

When I began this project, I wanted to explore the critical perception of Eustathius and many readers of Pindar today, that is, the notion that Pindaric poetry “practices obscurity.” Of course, the claim has been formulated eloquently many times over, perhaps most notably by John Hamilton, who demonstrates that scholars of Pindar often grant the text’s obscurity only to argue that their own interpretation safely irradiates any such darkness.² Foregoing such posturing, Hamilton’s own masterful study traces the reception of the Pindaric text *as obscure* by readers and poets from Horace to Hölderlin. But I wanted to formulate the question of Pindaric obscurity in terms of epinician performance and the social embeddedness of choral lyric poetry. Such an approach does not try in every instance to philologize away the “dark moments.” Rather, it starts by considering what contexts and features mark a fifth century poetic text as enigmatic, which is the aim of this Introduction. With these elements established, I describe below the central claim of the study, namely, that enigmatic speech within epinician poetry offered a site of dialogue for poets to stage before a performance audience.

To begin, we can be sure that the gathering of enigmatic forms has been the overriding concern of studies on riddles in Greek literature, a great chain of anthologizers that recedes back into the depths of pre-philological inquiry.³ Thus the compiling and organizing of *Rätselformen*

¹ Translations mine except where noted.

² Hamilton (2003) 1-11.

³ Ohlert (1912); Schultz (1909-1912); Petsch (1899).

by scholars over a century ago furthered the task begun by Athenaeus in Book X of the *Deipnosophistae*, and for Athenaeus, a major source was Clearchus of Soli (4th-3rd c. BCE), whose treatise *On Riddles*, in which, we are told, he identified seven basic types of riddles.⁴

It is with Clearchus' teacher Aristotle that the scholarly pursuit of investigating riddle forms begins, although Aristotle himself expressed a disdain for all things enigmatic. Indeed, it was by the influence of Aristotle's discussion that terms related to *ainigma* began to assume negative valences of *asapheia* "obscurity" – a deficiency in signifying. Defined as a kind of excess or lack, *ainigmata* are for Aristotle the negative exempla what good poetry, and good rhetoric, looks like.⁵ Limited evidence suggests that this view diverged significantly from how *ainigmata* and related terms were valued previously by other rhetorical teachers. For example, the pseudepigraphical *Rhetoric to Alexander*, a fourth century BCE rhetorical handbook, recommends speaking in *ainigmata* as an effective form of euphemism. According to the author, long identified as Anaximenes, an orator ought to deploy enigmatic speech on precisely the opposite grounds of Aristotle's critique: enigmatic utterances signify *just enough*.⁶ For example, in delivering a prosecution speech, we are instructed:

φυλάττου δὲ καὶ τὰς αἰσχροὺς πράξεις μὴ αἰσχροῖς ὀνόμασι λέγειν, ἵνα μὴ διαβάλῃς τὸ ἥθος, ἀλλὰ τὰ τοιαῦτα αἰνιγματωδῶς ἐρμηνεύειν καὶ ἐτέρων πραγμάτων ὀνόμασι χρώμενος δηλοῦν τὸ πρᾶγμα. (*Rhet. ad Alex.* 35.18)

Take care not to refer to shameful acts with shameful language so that you do not create prejudice against (your own) character. Instead, express such things allusively and make the matter clear by using language for other matters. (trans. Mirhady)

⁴ Wehrli (1948).

⁵ *Poetics* 22 1458 a18-b5; *Rhetoric* 1404b.

⁶ On the text and authorship, see Chiron (2002).

Thus speaking enigmatically, here defined as “using the names of other matters,” was a valid rhetorical strategy in the fourth century BCE, and was not maligned as murkiness *per se*, but was appreciated as rhetorically effective by a wide swath of an audience. Likewise, the work of literary critics in the fifth and fourth century employed *ainigma* terms to describe the allegories they understood to convey meaning in poetic texts.⁷ In those cases, too, enigmatic speech is not a literary flaw, but rather something worth of investigation and careful study. Divine speech and divine interpretation sometimes used the same terms to describe the content of mantic utterances, though as I discuss below, the application of an *ainigma* term to a mantic utterance often carries with it pejorative connotations.⁸

A fundamental point, then, is that the semantic field of *ainigma* terms is incomparably vaster than our own “riddle” and that these terms do not necessarily suggest “murkiness” or other negative valences. To speak enigmatically was often to speak in a way that appealed to and could be understood by a wide variety of listeners. This holds true in cases outside of euphemism, as riddling in ancient Greece was a both a popular speech genre and simultaneously a formal literary product.⁹

On the other hand, there does exist a field of continuity between what the Greek word *ainigma* signifies and our proper riddle, whose purpose is, broadly, to confound listeners, which is one reason why many ancient texts designated as *ainigmata* can still today be recognized as riddles several thousand years later even by non-specialists. However, many texts bearing the label *ainigma* are not recognizable as our “riddles.”¹⁰ In order to avoid confusion, the present

⁷ Struck (2004).

⁸ Pp. 10-18 below.

⁹ As Kurke (2011) on the tradition of Aesop demonstrates.

¹⁰ E.g., the many arithmetical problems in *AP XIV*, extended allegories, fables (*ainoi*), and puns. See below on Contexts and Features.

study will use the noun “riddle” only in cases where it refers to our modern proper riddle. I will instead use “enigmatic speech” or “*ainigma* forms,” designations which I intend to connote a field reference significantly broader than our “riddle.”

Of course, this still leaves open the question of what I think enigmatic speech *is*, not to say anything of what it is doing in Pindar. Happily, a recent study of Greek *ainigma* forms is also the most comprehensive – the monumental lexical survey of Aurélien Berra, who leveraged the powerful tools of the TLG to map out not only every occurrence of terms for enigmatic speech in Greek literature but also the contextual syntax of every occurrence of these terms, along with a discussion of every instance of enigmatic speech preserved in Athenaeus and the *Greek Anthology*.¹¹ Though the emphasis of his work is Greek thought, Berra traces the development of riddle terms through Greek, Latin, and early modern France, which offers his study a wealth of comparative material.

Berra’s conclusions are both technical and profound: He notes that the most common verb describing enigmatic speech (αἰνίσσομαι) is more than twice as common as its corresponding noun form (αἴνιγμα); that the term *griphos*, which derives from a metaphor of a fishing net, is about ten times as rare as *ainigma* and “slightly more marked” at the end of the classical period; and that the most common verbs for governing *ainigma* noun-forms are verbs of resolution (e.g., λύω), verbs of posing (προβάλλω), and also weaving (πλέκω).¹²

But what about archaic poetry, where, as Berra’s survey shows, there is generally a dearth of terms for enigmatic speech? Part of the problem with recording word frequencies, of course, is that there is a dearth of material *in general* from the archaic period. However, it is also

¹¹ Berra (2008).

¹² Berra (2008) 734-735.

true that the vocabulary for enigmatic speech only developed at the beginning of the fifth century, even while many genera and species of enigmatic speech represent an inherited Indo-European poetic speech.¹³ In Pindar, for example, there are only two uses of an *ainigma* term, one of which is only the barest of fragments and refers to the riddle of the sphinx.

In describing enigmatic speech relatively early in the literary record, the present study often has recourse to linguistic forms and discursive trends shared in common with later texts. In what follows, I discuss some of the main features and contexts of enigmatic speech in the Archaic period; by features I mean elements of syntax or rhetoric that characterize an utterance as enigmatic; by context, I refer to situation, tradition, and genre.

A. Contexts

1. Traces of the Greek Riddle Contest

The most easily well-known literary context for enigmatic speech is the tradition of performative poetic contests in which enigmatic speech was uttered by *sophoi* and judged by a king, often arbitrarily and with death as the penalty for the loser.¹⁴ Greek riddling contests also existed as a cultural practice, a game of the symposium in the archaic and classical periods, where the penalty for an incorrect answer was sometimes drinking brine.¹⁵ Because this latter

¹³ West (2007) 72-74, 368-372 and Watkins (1994) 179-196.

¹⁴ Besides the *Contest*, the four major examples are the 1. Hesiodic *Melampodia* of Calchas and Mopsus, M-W fr. 270-279, on which, see Huizinga (1949) and Flower (2008) 43-45; 2. Alexander's encounter with the *Gymnosophoi*, which is recorded in many different sources, including Strabo's citation of the Hellenistic historian Onesicritus and a papyrus fragment from ca. 100 BCE, on which see Van Thiel (1972), Stoneman (1992) 110-111, Bosman (2010); 3. Between Amasis and Bias, in Plut. *Sept. Sap. Conv.* 151A-E, on which, Konstantakos (2004); 4. Aristophanes' parody of a riddle contest in the *Frogs*, according to Rosen (2004) 5. Another possibility is the Hesiodic *Wedding of Ceyx* (M-W 263-268), which West (2012) understands to contain riddling exchanges, although the exiguous fragments, preserved mostly by Ps.-Tryphon under the heading αἰνιγμα, do not present the form of a contest *per se*.

¹⁵ See Ath. X 448e.

sympotic category, while important for the genesis and curation of early riddles, does not find representation in the Pindaric epinicia, my discussion will focus on the literary forms that the Pindaric speaker looks to as models for his own persona.

The most extensive surviving fragments of these *ainigma* contests, the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, suffers unfortunately from a lack of scholarly consensus on the date of its composition.¹⁶ The extant version dates to the Antonine period, though there are also two Hellenistic papyri whose similarity to the *Contest* seems to suggest the Antonine compiler's close adaptation of the work.¹⁷ An earlier *Contest* was likely composed as a rhetorical showpiece by Alcidas in the fourth century BCE, and there is good reason to suppose that the setting of the poetic contest and even certain of its riddles extend back into the early fifth century or even earlier.¹⁸

The *Contest* begins with a series of *ti maliston* or "What is best?" questions (*Certamen* 75-89), these being a very archaic kind of enigmatic dialogue, as I discuss below in relation to priamels. Thereafter the *Contest* presents the famous poets engaged in a line-completion contest reminiscent of the one between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.¹⁹ The following exchange is representative of this section:

¹⁶ For a discussion of the various dating theories, see Rosen (2004) 297-300. West (1967) prefers a fourth century date for the version of Alcidas as the exclusive source for the extant Antonine version; Richardson (1981) persuasively argues for a fifth century date and thus a certamen-tradition that supersedes Alcidas. Another line of reasoning, that of Milne (1924) 57-58, holds that Plutarch's *Seven Sages* (*Mor.* 153F-154A) actually preserves a more ancient version of the contest, even though in his version the poet Lesches has been substituted for Homer and the number of challenges has been greatly reduced within the narrative proper. Cf. also Heldmann (1982) 59-62 on an *Urcertamen* tradition.

¹⁷ See O'Sullivan (1992).

¹⁸ Richardson (1981) n. 14 above. The basic form of the contest is alluded to in Hesiod *WD* 650ff, though this is not explicitly a contest of riddles.

¹⁹ *Certamen* 107-137; on the origins of the Aristophanic contest, see Rosen (2004) on the *Frogs*. It is another earlier play, *Peace* (1282-1283) (421 BCE), that actually reproduces one of the riddles in the *Contest*, thus leading to the idea of the σοφία contest's antiquity and popularity. Likewise, the *Knights* (1060-1110) parodies an enigmatic speech competition between the Paphlagonian and the Sausage-seller, judged by the Demos. See below, p. 86.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δμήθη γάμωι Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα

—Καλλιστὼ κατέπεφνεν ἀπ’ ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο. (*Certamen* 117-118)

Hesiod: And when she had been conquered by rape, Artemis the arrow-pourer...

Homer: ...cut down Callisto with her silver bow.

The first line presents a paradox, *adunaton*, or false narrative (here, Artemis the victim of rape or euphemistically, “subdued in *gamos*”). The respondent must join the line with another hexameter so that the irregularity is resolved or corrected into a well-known mythological vignette. For example, in the above case, an impossibility is threatened by ambiguous syntax, specifically the ambiguity of clause boundary which seems to call for subject-verb agreement in “Artemis was conquered” (Ἄρτεμις δμήθη). Once the thought is successfully completed, however, we learn that it is not Artemis but Callisto who is the subject of the initial verb, “she was conquered.”²⁰

Such repairing of meaning and tradition enacted by the correct response was conceived of as “path-finding,” as is evidenced by how the *Contest* author/compiler writing in the Antonine Period calls these riddles *apora* (“pathless things”).²¹ The same metaphor is deployed by Hellenistic composers of riddle epigrams.²² Likewise Aristophanes uses the trope to frame his parody of an enigmatic speech competition in the *Knights*.²³ Even earlier in fifth century BCE

²⁰ The specifics of the myth are left out, and thus the text presumes the story is well known. At the same time, this seems to be the only version where Callisto is slain as a woman rather than a bear (cf. Ps.-Apollod. 3.100-101; Ps.-Eratosth. 1.8). Cf. also the riddling syntax constructed around the Callisto myth by Callimachus in *Hymn to Zeus* 10-41, discussed by Cheshire (2016) 83-86. Callisto’s identity, which is fluid and imbued with symbolic meaning, offers a rich target for enigmatic discourse.

²¹ See *Contest* 317.

²² See the alder riddle of Philetas (fr. 8 Lightfoot) which describes itself μύθων παντοίων οἶμον, discussed below pp. 46-47.

²³ Ar. Eq. 1015-6: φράζεσθ’ Ἐρεχθεΐδῃ λογίων ὁδόν, ἣν σοὶ Ἀπόλλων/ ἴαχεν ἐξ ἀδύτοιο διὰ τριπόδων ἐριτίμων. “Heed the path of words, which Apollo through his resounding tripods shouts from his sanctum.”

the figure seemed to have assumed the tenor of “cognitive challenge.”²⁴ For example, Heraclitus remarks:

ἐὰν μὴ ἔλπῃται ἀνέλπιστον οὐκ ἐξευρήσει, ἀνεξερεύνητον ἔδν καὶ ἄπορον. (Kahn VII)²⁵

He who does not expect will not discover the unexpected, for it is unexplored and pathless. (trans. Kahn)

Thus it is possible, I argue, to understand the road trope as intimately connected with the deployment of enigmatic speech even at early stages in the literary record.

In a related but different way, the Pindaric speaker constructs human understanding as a cognitive path. At the beginning of a paean given on the occasion of the solar eclipse in 478 BCE, the speaker invokes the path trope to address the sun *qua* object of interpretation:

<τί δ’> ἔθηκας ἀμάχανον
ἰσχύν <τ’> ἀνδράσι καὶ σοφίας ὁδόν,
ἐπίσκοτον ἀτραπὸν ἐσσυμένα; (Pa. 9.3-5 fr. 52k)

Why do you render helpless
both the strength of men and the path of *sophia*,
hastening along a darkened path?

And elsewhere the Pindaric speaker refers to time’s manipulation of the “path of life” in terms of cognitive challenge (δόλιος)²⁶:

15 δόλιος γὰρ αἰὼν ἐπ’ ἀνδράσι κρέμαται,
ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον (I. 8.14-15)

Cunning Time hangs over men,
twisting the path of life

²⁴ On the development of the image of the road see Becker (1937), on Pindar specifically pp. 50-100; Janko (1991) with further references; more broadly in early Greek thought Messimeri (2001) and Farandos (1982). Even older than this is the naming of *Poros* (“Way”) as a divinity, present in Alcman, at least according to the scholiast (A 14 ad *PMG* 1). See Page (1951) 33-37, Detienne and Vernant (1991) 144-162; cf. Ferrari (2008) 29-35, who argues that there is no personification here, but rather that the term carries astrological significance.

²⁵ = D-K 18

²⁶ As discussed by Detienne and Vernant (1991) 144.

Furthermore, I suggest that this cognitive road often works in conjunction with the theme of competition in fifth century Greek literature. We have already seen above how in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, the term *aporon* refers to the competitive act of solving individual riddles.²⁷ Likewise, to introduce the contest between Euripides and Aeschylus, the *Frogs* chorus embark the contestants upon a shared road which symbolizes the contest:

καὶ μὴν ἡμεῖς ἐπιθυμοῦμεν
παρὰ σοφοῖν ἀνδροῖν ἀκοῦσαι
τίνα λόγων ἐμμέλειαν
ἔπιτε δαΐαν ὁδόν. (Ar. *R.* 895-897)

We are truly bent on hearing from two wise men what nice sequence of words, what a hostile²⁸ path you both tread.

After this invitation, the poet issues a series of cognitive challenges and enigmatic forms reminiscent of the Hesiodic *Contest*, and Ralph Rosen has even argued that it is the *Contest* (or an early form thereof) which Aristophanes parodies in the *Frogs*.²⁹

Parallel and related developments see the term *paroimia* (“things along the road”) in poetic texts of the fifth century to mean “proverbial saying”³⁰ and the use of the road to describe prophetic speech.³¹ Likewise, the term *prooimion*, designating the beginning of a song, forms from the same *oimos* root and often contains metaphors and gnomes. Thus the image of the road connoted much more than “enigmatic speech” in the fifth century, but we can generalize that

²⁷ See the use of ἄπορος related words and concepts in Alexander’s encounter with the *gymnosophoi*, which Van Thiel (1972) 344 sees as a leitmotif of the episode.

²⁸ Or perhaps “clever,” by a pun on δάω.

²⁹ Rosen (2004).

³⁰ Aesch. Ag. 264 εὐάγγελος μὲν, ὥσπερ ἡ παροιμία/ ἕως γένοιτο μητρὸς εὐφρόνης πάρα. “Good news, just as the παροιμία goes: may the dawn arise from its mother, night”; also S. Aj. 664. This association is discussed by Martin (2009) 10, who notes that, on the one hand, οἶμη and its cognates can simply denote “course of song,” and thus παροιμία is something outside of or in addition to the poetic text. On the other, παροιμία is “the type of language event which would occur in conversation with the people whom you meet when you are walking down the street.”

³¹ Aesch. Ag. 1154 the chorus describes Cassandra’s enigmatic speech as a θεσπεσίας ὁδοῦ.

texts develop the trope with various qualifiers –blocked or unblocked, superior or dizzying– in order to stress cognitive challenge.

2. Divine Interpretation and *ainigma*

The road trope held broad sway in the Greek imaginary over various kinds of contested wisdom; *ainigmata* and proverbs share this contested space with divine interpretation as indicated by the expression the “path of prophecy,” which appears especially in tragedy.³² Indeed, to a certain extent and in certain contexts, *ainigma* and divine interpretation are conflated, an observation borne out by recent work on ancient discourses around interpretation.³³ Nevertheless, there is a tendency to jump logically from the fact that Apollo at Delphi was known to speak enigmatically to the conclusion that all enigmatic speakers fashioned themselves as divine interpreters or, even more broadly, that enigmatic speech inherently evokes a binary division between gods and humans.

For example, in his account of ancient theories of semiotics, Giovanni Manetti takes it as a foregone conclusion that Greek enigmatic speech is divinatory in origin:

There seems no longer to be any room for doubt about the close relationship between divinatory sign and the riddle. This can be confirmed by a diachronic analysis of the riddle “genre”, which originates precisely within the religious sphere of divination with the two self-same characteristics of divine hostility towards mortals and the idea of a challenge by contest.³⁴

³² Aesch. *Ag.* 1154; Soph. *OC* 1314; Eur. *Hec.* 744; *Hipp.* 290.

³³ Struck (2004) 21-76.

³⁴ Manetti (1993) 30.

Manetti is certainly correct to emphasize the discursive category of contest to describe early riddles. The broader claim about “origins” concerns this study only in an ancillary way, and I am not convinced we should grant the validity of such a generalization.³⁵

By contrast, I argue that the Pindaric corpus deploys enigmatic style in *marked juxtaposition with* divine interpretation rather than the complementary relationship that Manetti asserts. The broader question of whether this fact qualifies as something peculiar to Pindaric poetics is also worth considering. A more traditional approach to the text would perhaps argue so and claim therefore that an enigmatic style stems from the historical poet’s creative originality in combination with various mystery religions, as Duchemin asserts.³⁶ But such an argument does not satisfy me, for it is not sufficient, I believe, to account for 1.) the fact that even outside of Pindar *ainigma* terms and enigmatic speech are often singled out against divination and 2.) the pragmatics of performed poetry, which is a poetry of emergent consensus between text and audience, where the individuality of the speaker’s voice is subsumed in response to the concerns and understanding of the wider community. Even if an audience did not understand every riddling utterance that does not mean that they did not appreciate them as riddling utterances.

Manetti’s argument about *common origins* has influenced how commentators understand the *common form and function* of enigmatic speech and divine speech in the odes. Because it has

³⁵ Appealing as it may seem, the “diachronic” analysis Manetti proposes is far too limited to make such a sweeping claim. He cites the riddle of the sphinx as the “first riddle in a sacred context.” Two questions are here begged – when exactly does the riddle of the sphinx exist? And is it in fact the earliest sacred riddle? – the answers to which seems to be, respectively, the earliest testimonium is in the 5th century (Pindar 177d) and no. More troubling is the overly simplistic idea that enigmatic speech (proper riddles and other modes) are the raw material for conveying the theme of divinity’s superiority. A more complex relationship is evidenced by the fact that riddles occur in all cultures independent of divinatory practices, and that riddling speech is thought by some to have been the basic building blocks of language itself. There is a hypothesis that the Indo-European ur-poet was originally a sacrificial priest who utilized enigmatic speech; yet the form of the riddle underwent its own evolution independent of any particular sacral context. See e.g. the caution stressed by Toporov (1981) and Struck (2004) 178-179.

³⁶ Duchemin (1955), though the view of Pindar as a divine medium is fairly common, as indicated by Most (1986) 315 n64, with further references.

been influential and treats the Pindaric corpus comprehensively, Lucia Athanassaki's discussion of the relationship between divination and Pindar's poetry is worth quoting in full:

The truthfulness of divine discourse is the cornerstone of the truthfulness of [Pindar's] own poetry. In other words, divine and mantic discourse is a paradigm for Pindar's poetic discourse. Its allusive, discontinuous, and elliptical nature does not affect its content, which is always clear to its recipients, who like Pindar's audience are not the blind crowd, but the select individuals.³⁷

What kind of truthfulness can be characterized as "allusive, discontinuous, and elliptical"?

Athanassaki answers this difficulty by drawing a distinction of "blind crowd" and "select individuals," which seems to blend two Pindarisms: the mass of interpreters at the end of Olympian 2 and the "blindness" of Homeric readers in Nemean 7, neither of which examples appears in the context of a narrative involving divine interpretation.³⁸ Therefore, while this critical strategy may seem economical in "taking the poet as his word" about the difficulty or obscurity of his own poetry, it does not speak directly to the complexity of "truthfulness" raised by divinatory speech in Pindaric poetics.

How does such a division compare to this rest of the archaic-classical literary record? In his comprehensive account of the history and development of the literary symbol, Peter Struck builds the case that the practices of divination and riddling shared a similar conceptual vocabulary.³⁹ His overall point is essential and correct: beginning in the archaic and classical periods, prophecy and divination are often described or explained in terms of *ainigma*. One point of clarification I would offer is that when a text describes prophecy or divination as an *ainigma*, there is normally a hint of disdain or disbelief in the identity and skill of the divine interpreter in question. For example, Struck cites the riotous encounter between the oracle monger and

³⁷ Athanassaki (1990) 61.

³⁸ On these passages, see below, pp. 58-60 (N.7) and pp. 107-117 (O.2).

³⁹ Struck (2004) 170-179.

Pisthetaerus in the *Birds* as a straightforward example of how the text conceives of divine interpretation and *ainigma* as similar in form and function.⁴⁰ Yet the charge of “ainigmatizing” in Aristophanes’ play is meant to discredit the oracle monger’s status as divine interpreter (and probably, to provide a source of humor). The episode suggests that even if the two modes of speaking share similar cognitive rules (withholding referents, allegory), nevertheless a speech act “ainigmatizing” was perceived as quite different from “divining.”

This difference in perception extends to the perception of the speaker/divine interpreter, casting him or her as unreliable. For example, Struck cites Socrates’ designation as an *ainigma* the Delphic oracle pronouncing him as the wisest of the Greeks. At *Apology* 21b, Socrates accuses Apollo of speaking enigmatically (*αἰνίττεται*) in order to express his disbelief at its face level reliability (*οὐ γὰρ δήπου ψεύδεταί γε*), conveying thereby the sort of false modesty or *eirōneia* that is typical of the work.⁴¹ This reflection spurs Socrates to engage in a “questioning” (*ζήτησις*) of the Delphic god and other wise men. Once again, when someone describes a prophecy using an *ainiss-* word, it demonstrates that the prophecy is somehow insufficient or lacking in sense and requires further clarification or investigation. This destabilizes the authority of the expert/prophet/god, and can be quite extreme, as a third example of Struck’s from the *Timaeus* shows, where prophets are said to be ignorant of the content of their own message because they speak enigmatically.⁴² Perhaps the most striking example of all comes from the

⁴⁰ Av. 959-990; Struck (2004) 175-176 also cites *Pax* 45-47.

⁴¹ Struck (2004) 174, though he does not quote the passage, *Apology* 21b. I note Socrates’ great reluctance to designate Apollo’s utterance as an *αἰνίγμα*: ‘τί ποτε λέγει ὁ θεός, καὶ τί ποτε αἰνίττεται; ἐγὼ γὰρ δὴ οὔτε μέγα οὔτε σμικρὸν σύννοια ἐμαυτῷ σοφὸς ὢν: τί οὖν ποτε λέγει φάσκων ἐμὲ σοφώτατον εἶναι; οὐ γὰρ δήπου ψεύδεταί γε: οὐ γὰρ θέμις αὐτῷ.’ καὶ πολὺν μὲν χρόνον ἠπόρουν τί ποτε λέγει: ἔπειτα μόγις πάνυ ἐπὶ ζήτησιν αὐτοῦ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἐτραπόμην. “What in the world does the god mean, and what riddle is he propounding? For I am conscious that I am not wise either much or little. What then does he mean by declaring that I am the wisest? He certainly cannot be lying, for that is not possible for him. And for a long time I was at a loss as to what he meant; then with great reluctance I proceeded to investigate him somewhat as follows.” (Trans. Fowler)

⁴² Struck (2004) 174, citing *Ti.* 72b.

Symposium, which declares someone who ainigmatizes to be incapable of self-expression.⁴³ We could add to this the utterances of Cassandra described in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* as *ainigmata*, a fact which discredits (for the characters onstage) her status as a reliable divine interpreter.⁴⁴

Besides the evidence from Plato and Aristophanes, the most straightforward juxtaposition of divine interpretation and *ainigma* comes from a play very much concerned with both, *Oedipus Tyrannos*. What emerges from the following passage is not only the distinction between *ainigma* and divine interpretation, but also between the expert and the non-expert. Oedipus criticizes the seer Teiresias and draws a contrast between his own riddle-solving prowess and Teiresias'

manteia:

390 ἐπεὶ, φέρ' εἰπέ, ποῦ σὺ μάντις εἶ σαφής;
 πῶς οὐκ, ὅθ' ἡ ῥαυφῶδός ἐνθάδ' ἦν κύων,
 ἡὔδας τι τοῖσδ' ἀστοῖσιν ἐκλυτήριον;
 καίτοι τό γ' αἶνιγμ' οὐχὶ τοῦπιόντος ἦν
 ἀνδρὸς διειπεῖν, ἀλλὰ μαντείας ἔδει:
395 ἦν οὔτ' ἀπ' οἰωνῶν σὺ προυφάνης ἔχων
 οὔτ' ἐκ θεῶν τοῦ γνωτόν: ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μολών,
 ὁ μὴδὲν εἰδὼς Οἰδίπους, ἔπαυσά νιν,
 γνώμη κυρήσας οὐδ' ἀπ' οἰωνῶν μαθών: (Soph. *OT*. 390-398)

390 Tell me: Since when were you a lucid seer?
 When the song-weaver bitch was here, how did you not
 proclaim some solution for these townsfolk?
 This was not an *ainigma* for anyone coming upon it
 to interpret; rather, there was need of seercraft—
395 Something which you were revealed not to possess,
 not from birds; not known from one of the gods. Yet when I came
 as one knowing nothing; I, Oedipus stopped her,
 having struck upon a solution without having learned from divination...

This passage divides interpretation into two broad categories – that of the expert, practiced in *manteia* and that of the non-expert, who “comes upon” (τοῦπιόντος 393) a riddle and relies upon

⁴³ Struck (2004) 174, citing *Symp.* 192d.

⁴⁴ Aesch. *Ag.* 1183

only his wits to reach a solution. Oedipus seems at first disavow the non-expert, “happenstance” interpreter as beneath the expert (393-394). He then embraces the role, using this hierarchy of interpreters as the basis for his own vaunt over Teiresias: even without technical knowledge of signs (οἰωνῶν 398) he still “happened upon” (κυρήσας 398) a solution. This scenario riffs on the *ainigma*-as-deficit model discussed above. By ridiculing the bonafides of such a well-regarded seer, Oedipus seems to call into question the whole institution of divination. Because it spurns any appeal to the professional, such a move represents an even more pointed form of the divine interpretation-as-*ainigma* critiques of Plato and Aristophanes.

Given the disastrous outcome in store for Oedipus, one might reasonably ask whether riddle-solving by “wits alone” was actually understood as a reasonable option by a Greek audience. After all, it is precisely the outrageousness of Oedipus’ over-confidence that is at issue here; thus his arrogation of an interpretive role as a “non-expert solver” could be understood as transgressive.⁴⁵ Of course, the plot of the play confirms this transgressiveness by undermining the Theban King’s successful interpretation of the riddle. As others have pointed out, Oedipus may have given a correct response to the Sphinx, but he fails to understand its relevance to his own plight – the dis-ordering of life’s stages, the wordplay on “foot” with his own name. Can he really be said to have solved it at all?⁴⁶

⁴⁵ There is also some ambiguity about the precise referent of τὸ γ’ αἴνιγμα’ in 393. The famous riddle is never named in the play, and this term could in fact refer to the plague that has infested Thebes in the aftermath of Oedipus’ success insofar as the disease represents a sign of divine disfavor that must be interpreted. It would certainly make more sense that a natural problem rather than a proper riddle text is meant to be solved by seercraft. In any case, the point about Oedipus’ role transgression stands. On the antiquity and survival of the Oedipus riddle, see March (1987); the earliest attribution of a riddle to the sphinx comes from a fragment of Pindar (177d).

⁴⁶ On the many permutations of the Oedipus riddle’s solutions (outside of Greek literature), see Cook (2006) 8-18. Her discussion of Borges’ epigram on the meaning of the riddle is particularly striking. On the history of alternative solutions, with reference to Oedipus’ own name, see Katz (2006) 166-167 n28 and *passim*.

Oedipus' obvious transgressive role notwithstanding, the fact that divine interpreters existed alongside and occasionally competed with other kinds of interpretive roles and that oracular texts existed alongside popular *ainigma* is assumed generally in Greek literature. For example, we have the fragmentary remains of several plays which tell the story of Polyidos, a seer who seems to have solved a proper riddle and then practiced divination from animal signs. But the text maintains the separation: each of these activities are conceived as separate modes of interpretation, and it is the *ainigma* rather than the sign interpretation which survives the more successfully in the literary record.⁴⁷ Likewise, the figure of Aesop contests the authority of the Delphic oracle by means of telling and interpreting fables and on occasion, riddles.⁴⁸ A similar dynamic emerges in the conceit of the roadside *ainigma* in Hellenistic epigrams, where the speaker of the poem assumes the identity of the non-expert, someone who happens to “come upon” an *ainigma*.⁴⁹

Compared to Hellenistic epigram, this Sophoclean passage even more explicitly describes the role of the non-expert interpreter. We have evidence that “meeting with/stumbling upon” (συμβάλλειν) a proper riddle or other object of interpretation was a remarkably enduring expression in the ancient world, and the term *symbolos/symbolon* and all its cognates refer to this kind of interpretive happenstance quite early in Greek literature (as we shall see below in Pindar and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*).⁵⁰ This professional/non-professional dynamic was

⁴⁷ Eur. *Polyidos* (N fr. 635-645); Soph. *Seers* (N 389a-400); Aesch. *Cretan Women* (N 116-120) and the discussion of Konstantakos (2004) 105-108. The testimonium of Hyginus *Fab.* 136 sequences the riddling interpretation scene from the divination scene; moreover, in solving the riddle, Polyidos competes with the professional interpreters (augures) of King Minos, similar to how Oedipus competes with Teresias. At the same time, Polyidos is quite different from Oedipus in his eventual embrace of μαντεία; he is both a riddler and a divine interpreter.

⁴⁸ Kurke (2011) 59-74.

⁴⁹ See below pp. 144-147 for a discussion of this type of epigram.

⁵⁰ Struck (2004) 91f; with further references; there is also of course the “token of authentication” meaning familiar from tragedy.

occasionally ritualized; Pausanias records that there was a “poor man’s oracle” of Hermes at Phares, which gave a prophecy on the basis of what sound the consulter happened upon next, be it the crowing of a cock or the laughter of a child.⁵¹

In this way, even though there is an overlap in form between the utterances described as *ainigma* and prophecy and even though actual *manteis* may very well have partaken in riddling exchanges or contests, it is also important to acknowledge that diverse texts such as Plato, Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Aeschylus construct the relationship between divine interpretation and *ainigma* in terms of deficit, both in respect to cognition and authority.⁵² Such a characterization runs counter to the traditional respect afforded prophets along with, in many cases, their elite embeddedness, which gave rise to a vocabulary that described divine interpretation in terms of skill/truth. To call a prophetic utterance an *ainigma* is to question the authority of the text in favor of one’s own reasoning and intellect, while at the same time acknowledging one’s un-professional status. An underlying reason for this “deficit potential” of the prophecy-as-*ainigma* designation could entail the competition context discussed in the previous section, the idea that actual, non-prophetic *ainigmata* were loci of competition, and thus a speaker who considers an *ainigma* is at pains to point out the shortcoming of the utterance’s surface meaning. Another could have to do with the history of the *symbolon*, which, as Struck notes, was originally a token of verification.⁵³ Thus by asserting a prophetic utterance to be an *ainigma* one “un-certifies” the text, and “re-certifies” or asserts one’s own text and status as an interpreter.

⁵¹ Pausanias 7.22.2-3 and see the discussion of Larson (2007) 145-146.

⁵² See further Flower (2008) 132-152 on denials of and skepticism about mantic authority.

⁵³ Struck (2004) 78-84.

In sum, the tendency of Pindaric interpreters, ancient and modern, to construct a mantic role or persona for the speaker of the odes emphasizes cases where the Pindaric speaker defines himself and his audience as “skilled” while largely ignoring instances where they are “unskilled” or unable to apply the professional skills of divination. To reiterate: Certainly, it is true that there are instances where the practice of divine interpretation (prophecy, divination, or seercraft) are narrated by the Pindaric speaker and even instances where historical projects of colonization are invoked by the speaker in the service of current colonization. Although the heyday of colonization had passed by the mid-fifth century, seercraft remained an important local and panhellenic institution, and colonial identity remained as important as ever within local mythologies and political alliances.⁵⁴

At the same time, an examination of mantic passages in Pindar suggests it is best to understand the text’s use of mantic language and, less commonly, a mantic voice, as a phenomenon that occurs in marked juxtaposition to enigmatic speech. I reach this claim because, just as in the broader literary record described above, these two kinds of speaking – through *manteia* and *ainigma* – are kept notionally separate in the Pindaric text, even if, as Struck claims, in actual practice and idiom they overlapped quite a bit.⁵⁵ By notionally separate, I mean both narratively and cognitively: narratively, in reference to mantic speech’s tendency toward direct speech in the epinicia, which separates mantic prophecy from the speaker’s voice; cognitively, with reference to the style and difficulty of enigmatic speech over mantic speech, which, as a rule, is presented transparently and immediately explained by the speaker.

⁵⁴ Dougherty (1992) and more recently Foster (2010, 2013).

⁵⁵ The major examples being: P. 9.51-65 (Chiron’s prophecy, noted below, pp. 73-74); P. 4 (six instances of divine interpretation, noted below pp. 88-89); P. 8. 44-55 (Amphiaraus’ prophecy, discussed below pp. 112-118); N. 1.61-72 (Speaker reports Teiresias on Heracles); Isthmian 6.52-54 (The speech of Zeus’ eagle regarding Ajax’s name); I. 8.31-46 (Themis on the birth of Achilles); Apollo’s interpretation of the omen at O. 8 is direct enough (Apollo is presented as an interpreter rather than a teller of signs, somewhat unusually), even if its precise referent (specific identity of Trojan conquerors compared to “jumping snakes”) is left vague.

3. Children, divinity, and *ainigmata*

The facets of an ancient discourse surrounding divine interpretation outlined above comprise only one aspect of how enigmatic speech relates to the gods in the Pindaric corpus. If the last section focused on how texts talk *about* interpreting signs including *ainigmata*, I now consider why interpretive activity is significant on a thematic and even ritual level. In discussing the identity of those who speak about the gods, this section builds on the distinction of expert and non-expert and looks for where and why that distinction breaks down, which I argue to be in instances of the cognition of children.

Overall, my approach to the evidence becomes more granular and synchronic than in the previous section. Instead of examining how individual works develop the idea of interpretation over a lengthy narrative or a performance (which takes for granted that there is development to discuss) I analyze individual scenes that place human minds in competition with divinity by using children or the idea of children. Such a move toward competition complements and expands the concerns of the competition section, which sketched the competitive sage-like figure who speaks in riddles. The competitive scenarios in this section call attention to the differences between human and divine cognitive abilities. To this category belong nearly all narrative accounts of oracular consultation, where the questioner is usually interested in his own future/identity or the collective identity of his people.⁵⁶

The other major thread in this section is the ritual significance of enigmatic speech performed by or through children. Whereas the ritual foundations of oracular consultation have

⁵⁶ E.g. Battus' stutter, Croesus, Themistocles; and the role of the Pythia in certifying Socrates as wisest of the Greeks in the *Apology*. See Kindt (2006) on oracular exchanges in the Croesus episode from Herodotus and a discussion of oracular obscurity that stresses the differences between gods and humans.

long been acknowledged, I contend that the ritual power of competitive verbal art ought to extend to other enigmatic exchanges. For not only does enigmatic speech authorize the text (as was argued in chapters one and three), but it also creates an opportunity for the audience to engage in a cognitive act. The performance and re-performance of occasional poetry then ritualizes this act in a way that creates meaning locally and universally. I propose two models for ritualization of enigmatic speech that involve children or the notion of childhood.

Perhaps the earliest form of a child speaking enigmatically is recorded in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which portrays a competition of sign giving where a divinity spurs the audience to cognitive participation. This is accomplished by two enigmatic speakers working together throughout the composition. Both the infant trickster god and the *Hymn* narrator interpret signs in a way that invites the audience to participate in the cognitive act of decipherment. For example, at the beginning of the work, the infant god practices a kind of sign interpretation and plays verbally with the referent:

30 σύμβολον ἤδη μοι μέγ' ὀνήσιμον: οὐκ ὀνοτάζω.
 χαῖρε, φυὴν ἐρόεσσα, χοροῖτύπε, δαιτὸς ἐταίρη,
 ἀσπασίῃ προφανεῖσα: πόθεν τόδε καλὸν ἄθυρμα
 αἰόλον ὄστρακον ἔσσο χέλυσ ὄρεσι ζώουσα; (*HMerc.* 30-33)

30 Now here is a beneficial *symbolon* for me: I do not find fault.
 Hail, one lovely in form, dance-striker, companion of the feast,
 whose joy shines forth: From where does this beautiful plaything
 don a patterned shell, a tortoise living in the mountains?

What Hermes sees at the beginning of the work he calls a *symbolon*, a term that was shown in the previous section to indicate an interpretive object of happenstance. But rather than name the object that has happened upon his path, Hermes withholds it, choosing instead to deploy the elaborate descriptor string in lines 31-32. Hewing close to the Aristotelian definition of *ainigma*, in the *Poetics*, this kind of speech is enigmatic in style because it layers on several images at

once, which the interlocutor and performance audience must decipher before the answer (χέλος 33) is revealed in the following line.⁵⁷ Thus the infant Hermes gives an *ainigma* in response to a *symbolon*.

The young god's enigmatic compositional style is mirrored by a narrative voice that delights the performance audience with ribald circumlocutions involving digestive processes. Towards the end of the work, having evaded capture the god of divination and even having stolen his cattle, Apollo finally catches up to Hermes and delivers the following verses, which David Bain is correct to identify as a "kind of riddle by means of highly poetic, almost dithyrambic terms"⁵⁸ :

σὺν δ' ἄρα φρασάμενος τότε δὴ κρατὺς Ἀργειφοντης
295 οἰωνὸν προέηκεν ἀειρόμενος μετὰ χερσίν,
τλήμονα γαστρὸς ἔριθον, ἀτάσθαλον ἀγγελιώτην. (*HMerc.* 294-296)

And then indeed did the mighty slayer of Argos give a sign
295 being held in Apollo's hands, he sent forth
a wretched servant of the belly, a wicked messenger

Again, this sort of competitive utterance works on multiple levels. The infant god of messengers performs a sign for the god of divination to decipher, and the narrator represents the sign in the style of an *ainigma*, stretching out his circumlocution for an entire line for the performance audience to decipher (and never actually saying what he means).⁵⁹ Thus does non-professional

⁵⁷ *Poetics* 22 1458a18-b5; The mythological episode later became the inspiration for a proper riddle in *Greek Anthology* XIV describing the creation of the tortoise shell lyre:

Κριὸν ἔχω γενετῆρα, τέκεν δέ με τῷδε χελώνῃ
τικτομένη δ' ἄμφω πέφνον ἐμοὺς γονέας. (*AP.* XIV.30)

I have a ram for a parent, and with this (ram) a tortoise shell bore me. But in being born I slew both my parents.

Sophocles stretches out the remark into a lengthy riddling routine in his *Ichneutai* (N f. 318.300-310), perhaps evidence that a form of the riddle was circulating in the fifth century.

⁵⁸ Bain (2007) 51.

⁵⁹ It is somewhat difficult to ascertain whether such a reference was understood as humorous. Certainly, flatulence in Old Comedy is meant as a source of humor. The withholding of the naming of the bodily function need not indicate that the *Hymn* is of a high register, as Bain (2007) 51-52 explains.

infant speaker (Hermes) compete with professional interpretation (Apollo) and skilled poet-narrator with his audience. As in the preceding section, these two examples from the *Hymn* show how *ainigmata* and divine interpretation can offer a site of cognitive competition, and besides these, there are numerous other examples of Hermes or the narrator engaging in an enigmatic style.⁶⁰

The *Hymn* represents more than the previous examples of divine interpretation competing with *ainigma*, precisely because of the extent to which the enigmatic speaker is a non-expert. This speech comes from the mouth of a child, a fact which heightens the discontinuity of verbal skill among interlocutors and raises the stakes of the interpretive game. It is true, of course, that Hermes is not just any child and that he is at all times exceedingly clever. But he is seen by other interpreters in the work as a child, and the outcome of the *Hymn* maintains his insecure position as a young god who does not receive the mantic gift he desires in order to vie with Apollo.⁶¹ Hermes himself reinforces the notion that he is a child by naming his discourse an *athurma* (32 “game/plaything”).⁶² The designation predicts the ludic character the whole introductory episode (and much of the rest of the composition), as indicated here by Hermes describing the animal before him and perhaps also his own act of interpretation.

In the *Homeric Hymn*, the audience must authorize the cognitive powers of a child in order to play along with the enigmatic speaker and narrator of the poem. But such an authorization comes at a cost. Because children are generally held in such low regard in terms of their cognitive ability, the audience’s appreciation and engagement with would have entailed, for

⁶⁰ For example, Hermes’ rejoinder to the old man anticipates the riddle of contradictions present in Plato below p. 27-28; see Detienne and Vernant (1991) 301-303 for more examples of how Hermes and the narrator confound various interlocutors with “doubling” speech.

⁶¹ See Hermes’ response to his mother’s scolding for his cattle theft: (163-164) μήτερ ἐμή, τί με ταῦτα δεδίσκειαι, ἥνυτε τέκνον νήπιον, Mother mine, why did you greet me this way, as a dumb child?

⁶² Cf. how Sophocles describes the episode in the fragmentary *Ichneutae*: (N 314.124-125) τὴν’ αὖ, πρόσπαιον “something playful.”

lack of a better term, a suspension of disbelief. A rather famous passage from Pindar makes this point succinctly:

75 γένοι' οἷος ἐσσι̃ μαθῶν: καλὸς τοι πίθων παρὰ παισίν, αἰεὶ
καλός. ὁ δὲ Ῥαδάμανθους εὖ πέπραγεν, ὅτι φρενῶν
ἔλαχε καρπὸν ἀμώμητον, οὐδ' ἀπάταισι θυμὸν τέρπεται ἔνδοθεν:
οἷα ψιθύρων παλάμαις ἔπετ' αἰεὶ βροτῶ. (P.2.72-75)

Become what sort you are, having learned it: Beautiful indeed is an ape to children, ever beautiful. And Rhadamanthus did well, because he obtained by lot the blameless fruit of the mind, nor did he gladden his heart with deceit.

75 These sorts of things always follow a mortal by the tricks of whisperers.

Children are here held up by the speaker of Pythian 2 as negative examples of cognitive ability; the ultimate non-experts, they belong nowhere near a king such as Hieron, whether as flatterers or plotters or advisors.⁶³ This specific child-negative discourse picks up on intellectual currents active in Heraclitus, where the beauty and stupidity of the ape is proverbial.⁶⁴ There may in fact be more at stake in this passage than a simple disavowal of children's intelligence, especially if there is a pun on *kalos* (72, 73 repeated for effect) and *kallias* (another word for "ape").⁶⁵ What does it mean that a disavowal of children's intelligence nonetheless reports their cleverness at making puns? On the other hand, perhaps the children who say *kalos* when they see a *kallias* are

⁶³ cf. Is. Ev. 9.22; praising the good sense of a child; S OT 1510-1511, where the King condemns his children for their lack of intelligence. Both of these examples and many others are discussed by Golden (2015) 4-6.

⁶⁴ On this proverbial nature of the expression before Pindar, see the thorough survey of Hubbard (1990) 75-77. The relevant passages of Heraclitus are:

Kahn LVI (= D-K 82-83) [Plato], *Hippias Major* 289A-B

[[τὸ τοῦ Ἡρακλείτου εὖ ἔχει, ὡς ἄρα πιθήκων ὁ κάλλιστος αἰσχροὺς ἀνθρώπων γένει συμβάλλειν.... ἢ οὐ καὶ Ἡράκλειτος αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὄν σὺ ἐπάγῃ, ὅτι ἀνθρώπων ὁ σοφώτατος πρὸς θεὸν πίθηκος φανεῖται καὶ σοφίῃ καὶ σοφίῃ καὶ κάλλει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν;]]

[[The most beautiful of apes is ugly in comparison with the race of man; the wisest of men seems an ape in comparison to a god.]]

Kahn LVII (= D-K 79) Origen, *Contra Celsum* VI.12

ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμνος ὅκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός

A man is found foolish by a god, as a child by a man.

⁶⁵ This is suggested by Verdenius (1959) in reference to Heraclitus; also Barkhuizen (1975) 25-26 proposes a pun on Rhadamanthus (73) and μαθῶν (72).

not making a pun but simply unable to pronounce the word correctly, and thus the narrator engages in the same kind of verbal play as these notional children, a dynamic similar to that of the *Hymn*.

The *Hymn*'s demonstration of childhood intelligence, however, is different because it is not a subtext; the cleverness of Hermes is performed *in propria persona*, not described. In this case, the question becomes, what kind of capital must the text spend in order to make feasible this "suspension of disbelief" regarding the cognitive abilities of children? One answer is to consider how this passage might represent or encode ritual activity. Sarah Iles Johnston has proposed that the original performance context for the *Hymn* was the Hermaia, the athletic games conducted in various cities throughout archaic and classical Greece. She argues that the performance of the *Hymn* regulates the maturation of young and adolescent males and in this way perpetuates the already widespread image of Hermes as a kourotrophic/pedotrophic deity.⁶⁶ However, Johnston never discusses whether enigmatic speech might serve or even further define such a kourotrophic purpose. But if, as I argue below, enigmatic discourse was considered a kind of speech practiced by children in archaic Greece and was subsequently represented in the literary record as an educational tool, then it becomes possible to see how the poem speaks directly to youths and educates them on various aspects of childhood and maturation, as Johnston contends.⁶⁷

Because anthropology has long studied riddling as a phenomenon involving children, it can be useful to draw on its categorization schemes in discussing the ancient evidence. Broadly

⁶⁶ Johnston (2002) 116-119. The argument relies on the fact that the games were earlier than most scholars suppose, but the evidence is suggestive and derives from Pindar and the scholiasts.

⁶⁷ Johnston (2002) 112-115 cites Indo-European cattle thievery as ritual initiation, on which see Herzfeld (1985), although she is very careful not to conflate this kind of initiation (which does not exist by the archaic period) with the maturation function she sees in the poem.

speaking, anthropologists propose two models regarding the enigmatic speech of children.⁶⁸ There is the more traditional model, which holds that riddles speak between generations, transferring knowledge and institutional memory from old to young people.⁶⁹ This dovetails with Johnston's "kourotrophic" reading of the *Hymn*, which stresses the transfer of knowledge and proper behavior as part of Hermes' journey along the road. The ritual of knowledge transfer aligns with the ritual of coming of age. By speaking enigmatically, Hermes and the narrator engage young people in their own idiom and spur them to participate cognitively and behaviorally in the regime of Zeus' justice and the proper cultivation of the "twelve gods" represented in the poem.⁷⁰

On its own, however, such a model is insufficient, I think, to account for the fact that as far as the *Hymn* is concerned, no adult speaks to, let alone instructs, a child through the medium of *ainigma*. For this reason, we ought to look at a separate model, one which accurately describes a text in which riddling is a speech act performed by children themselves.⁷¹ One such model constructs riddling as a kind of play regime that validates the agency and creativity of children, rather than a set of hierarchical concerns mediated by adults.⁷² In other words, Hermes uses enigmatic speech to assert his own agency and to inflict his mode of play upon various interlocutors and the audience. This play offers another example of a ritualized reversal of a social hierarchy, which could be compared the satire of Old Comedy and religious rituals such as

⁶⁸ See Roemer (1999) 161-190 with extensive bibliography.

⁶⁹ e.g., Hart (1964) Köngäs Maranda (1971); Gossen (1974) 15-16; Mould (2002).

⁷⁰ cf. Pindar O. 5.5 and Johnston (2002) 126 n57 with further citations.

⁷¹ "Through telling and interpreting the riddles, therefore, children understand cultural and social phenomena appropriate to their contexts" Jirata (2012) 282.

⁷² Jirata (2012), following McDowell (1979) 28 *Children's Riddling*: "Riddles, then, are ludic or playful devices built out of interrogative availabilities in the host language and culture. Riddles seize on one of the most basic conversational resources and turn it to purposes of diversion, play, and, since antistructure ultimately comments on structure, to purposes of transcendent enlightenment as well." See also Lieber (1976), Bauman (1977) 26-27.

the Argive Hybrisitka.⁷³ Of course, the reversal applies only until the end of the *Hymn*, where Hermes' enigmatic speech loses out to Apollo's mantic power in accordance with the judgment of Zeus, thus providing yet another example of the authorizing power of *manteia* over *ainigma* (as we saw in the previous section).⁷⁴ But this reversion to and ultimate validation of the status quo has always been a key component of anthropological approaches to ritual speech.⁷⁵

Both models are well represented and useful in examining the Greek literary record around child-involved *ainigmata*, and I understand it as axiomatic that they are not mutually exclusive. We find the former model (kourotrophic, intergenerational knowledge transfer) of enigmatic speech encoded in didactically-oriented texts written explicitly for children, including sympotic poetry, epinicia, and certain choral genres such as the partheneion. Though we may access the latter model (child-mediated riddles as play) only indirectly through the accounts of how children speak and consume enigmatic speech (Plato, Plutarch) and in certain cases, representations of ancient child speakers (Plutarch, such as the *Hymn*), the model remains a useful heuristic for understanding certain Pindaric representations of childhood, as I will discuss.

In order to lay the groundwork for specific discussion of how child riddling works in the Pindaric text, I now provide a brief survey of the literary record of the archaic and classical period involving children as enigmatic speakers vis-à-vis these anthropological models. An obvious starting point is the literary critical discussion of poetry's reception by young readers (or listeners), which is contained in Plato and Plutarch, who have always dominated and perhaps even skewed our understanding of actual literary practices at any one time and place. Still, it is

⁷³ For the Argive Hybrisitka, see Plut. *Mul. Virt.* 245e-f. See Kowalzig (2007) 38-39, 44-46 for further examples and how ritual in performance represents, contradicts, and sometimes validates power.

⁷⁴ As discussed by Kurke (2011) 60-61.

⁷⁵ Kowalzig (2007) 39, with further references.

noteworthy that among ancient discussions of education there are specific reference to the young mind's encounter with "hidden meaning" and obscurity, the very sorts of cognitive conditions operative in the production and interpretation of enigmatic speech.

ὁ γὰρ νέος οὐχ οἷός τε κρίνειν ὅτι τε ὑπόνοια καὶ ὃ μὴ, ἀλλ' ἃ ἂν τηλικούτος ὦν λάβῃ ἐν ταῖς δόξαις δυσέκνιπτά τε καὶ ἀμετάστατα φιλεῖ γίγνεσθαι. (Pl. *Rep.* II.378d-e)

For the young person is not able to discern what is a hidden meaning and what is not; rather, being of a certain age, whatever things he receives are likely to become difficult to expunge and unchangeable in his beliefs.

The sentiment's purpose is obviously a moralizing one. It takes for granted the kourotrophic function of poetry and performance that is further expounded upon in the *Laws*.⁷⁶ Children are impressionable, and therefore care should be taken as to what they read. Yet in order to make the point, Socrates invokes children's encounter with "hidden meaning," (ὑπόνοια) rather than what would seem to be a more obvious threat, that is, the dangerousness of morally incorrect poetry.⁷⁷ In other words, the argument presumes that children are in fact accustomed to encountering objects of interpretation containing hidden meaning and then internalizing these to such a degree that they become "unchangeable."

This framing of the argument supports the idea that children are understood by Plato as consumers of hidden meaning broadly, a field of communication that includes enigmatic speech. Moreover, since Socrates' larger point here is about how myths ought to be understood allegorically, it seems to argue that hidden meaning is already part of the education of young people.⁷⁸ In addition to corroboration from the Theognidean corpus as well as the *Deipnosophistae*, such a reality is supported later in the same work when Socrates cites the

⁷⁶ Calame (2001) 222-24; see the discussion of Kowalzig (2004).

⁷⁷ cf. Xen. *Symp.* 3.6 on the "underlying meaning" of Homer.

⁷⁸ The reference is to the whole of cosmogonic myths, which naturally lend themselves to allegory.

following “riddle of children.”⁷⁹ Here children are not only receivers but also producers of interpretative objects, specifically *ainigmata*:

τοῖς ἐν ταῖς ἐστιάσεσιν, ἔφη, ἐπαμφοτερίζουσιν ἔοικεν, καὶ τῷ τῶν παίδων αἰνίγματι τῷ περὶ τοῦ εὐνούχου, τῆς βολῆς πέρι τῆς νυκτερίδος, ᾧ καὶ ἐφ’ οὗ αὐτὸν αὐτὴν αἰνίττονται βαλεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα ἐπαμφοτερίζειν, καὶ οὐτ’ εἶναι οὔτε μὴ εἶναι οὐδὲν αὐτῶν δυνατόν παγίως νοῆσαι, οὔτε ἀμφοτέρα οὔτε οὐδέτερον. (Pl. *Rep.* V 479 B-C)

He said: it was like in the ambiguous sayings of the hearth in particular the *ainigma* of children about the eunuch, about the striking of the bat, with what and upon what they riddle that this one struck it; for these things also go both ways, and it is not possible to know solidly that either one or both or neither is or is not the case.

Socrates here refers to the riddle recorded by the scholia: “A tale there is, a man not yet a man,/ Seeing, saw not, a bird and not a bird,/ Perching upon a bough and not a bough,/ And hit it—not, with a stone and not a stone.” Answers: Eunuch, squinting, saw a bat, and while sitting on a reed, threw a pumice stone at it but missed.”⁸⁰ These solutions are all liminal entities, straddling the boundaries of categories usually thought to be binary.

It is not surprising that Plato constructs interpretation and *ainigma* as detrimental to the education of children, since to speak enigmatically is often to twist together dissimilar categories of thought, using language to see as single what is normally dual, or vice versa.⁸¹ Aristotle will further engage in anti-*ainigma* polemic by replacing its conceptual function with his own term “metaphor.”⁸² As regards the content of Plato’s account of a child riddle: The similarity between

⁷⁹ On Theognis’ riddles, see Ath. 457b and Beta (2016) 38-40; on Diphilus’ child riddling, see Ath. 451b (Edmunds (1960) *Theseus* fr. 50); on sympotic riddles involving children and childishness, see Ath. 457d-f; further Bowie (2013); Beta (2012) 73-80. In Ch. 1 I discuss (pp. 59-60 below) the riddle of children posed to Homer, which results in his death, and was current in the fifth century BCE (D-K 56; Hipp. *Ref.* IX.9.5).

⁸⁰ Translation and “answers” from Shorey (1946); Scholia text is Greene (1988) 235 ad 479c, which cites two very similar versions of the riddle, the former (translated above) is said to be preserved in Clearchus’ treatise *On Riddles*.

⁸¹ Detienne and Vernant (1991) 303-304.

⁸² See further Struck (2004) 64-65, discussing *Poetics* 1458a18-26: “Aristotle actually defines metaphor, his new central category of poetic language, over and against αἰνύματα, which we know from the Derveni text to be already fully implicated in allegorical reading and from supporting testimonia to be a generally known term of art... Aristotle characterizes the enigma as a *flaw* of the poetic craft, counterbalanced by the opposite flaw of perfectly ordinary speech. As is typical of his method, Aristotle invents a mean, and in the process labels a group of his predecessors as extremists.” (emphasis original).

the negation structure of this riddle of Plato's and Hermes' speech to the old man in the *Hymn* is striking.⁸³ It also resembles the “unity of opposites” figure that I discuss in Chapter One below. *Ainigmata* are exceptionally prone to describing “hybrid” beings who inhabit two or more spheres of identity simultaneously.⁸⁴

In the *Republic*, Plato uses the riddle to elucidate for his readership the specific point of his philosophy of language. The same riddle, if we are to believe a Byzantine commentator on Hermogenes the 2nd c. CE rhetorician was later cited in anti-Platonic polemics, and certainly, riddles seem to be on Aristotle's mind in writing on homonymy in the *Metaphysics*.⁸⁵ Thus, not only is this riddle described as a kind of speech that children performed for each other (child mediated model), it also had an important afterlife as an educational text (kourotrophic model).

While the kourotrophic model does not fit particularly oracular exchanges particular well, the ritualized speech of oracular exchange – spoken by a child to an adult– could plausibly be understood as a form of child-mediated play akin to the *Hymn*. At the same time, the Pythia was thought to speak gibberish, while attendants translated the speech into riddling hexameters.⁸⁶ But even given these logistics, it is perhaps telling that Plutarch offers a description of oracular consultation that subtly validates a child-mediated model of riddling in oracular exchange in his account of how oracular responses changed over time:

⁸³ *HMerc* 93-94: καὶ τε ἰδὼν μὴ ἰδὼν εἶναι καὶ κωφὸς ἀκούσας,/ καὶ σιγᾶν ὅτε μὴ τι καταβλάπτῃ τὸ σὸν αὐτοῦ. “[remember] not to have seen what you have seen and not to have heard what you have heard, and to keep silent when nothing of your own is harmed” (trans. Evelyn-White).

⁸⁴ Detienne and Vernant (1991) 301-304.

⁸⁵ See Walz (1834) 202, citing the commentary of John of Sicily (“Doxapatres”); on homonymy, Arist. *Met.* 1006a-b.

⁸⁶ Fontenrose (1978) 196ff, following Amandri (1950) 41-56, notes that fifth century sources, such as Herodotus, always represent the Pythia conversing directly with clients and dispels the idea of “mantic frenzy” as a creation of Plato's *Phaedrus*; rather he argues (214-216) that verse oracles were likely never spoken by the Pythia and seems to accept the testimony of Plutarch elsewhere (*Mor.* 406f-407d) that either poet-attendants of the sanctuary were responsible for versification or chresmologue compilers held in wide disrepute. Direct oracular consultation, of course, was only one form of divination available at Delphi; see further, Johnston (2008) 51-56.

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς τότε χρόνοις ἦσαν οἱ τὴν λοξότητα τῶν χρησμῶν καὶ ἀσάφειαν αἰτιώμενοι, καὶ νῦν εἰσὶν οἱ τὸ λίαν ἀπλοῦν συκοφαντοῦντες. ὧν παιδικὸν ἐστὶ κομιδὴ καὶ ἀβέλτερον τὸ πάθος: ὡς γὰρ οἱ παῖδες ἱριδας μᾶλλον καὶ ἄλλως καὶ κομήτας ἢ σελήνην καὶ ἥλιον ὀρῶντες γεγῆθασιν καὶ ἀγαπῶσιν, καὶ οὗτοι τὰ αἰνίγματα καὶ τὰς ἀλληγορίας καὶ τὰς μεταφορὰς τῆς μαντικῆς ἀνακλάσεις οὔσας πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν καὶ φανταστικόν, ἐπιποθοῦσιν καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν μὴ ἱκανῶς πύθωνται τῆς μεταβολῆς, ἀπίασιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταγνόντες, οὐχ ἡμῶν οὐδ' αὐτῶν ὡς ἀδυνάτων ὄντων ἐξικνεῖσθαι τῷ λογισμῷ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διάνοιαν. (Plut. *De Pyth.* 409c-d)

But just as in those previous times there were ones finding fault with the obscurity and murkiness of oracles, even now there are ones bringing accusations against excessive simplicity. The *pathos* of these is altogether childish and inferior. For just as children love and rejoice at seeing rainbows and halos and comets more than the sun or moon, these too having called for *ainigmata* and allegories and metaphors which are call-backs to the mantic art for the mortal imagination, they have a desire for these even while they do not sufficiently understand the cause of the change, and they leave, being condescending to the god but not to us or to themselves, since they are unable to reach the perspective of the god by reasoning.

Here the narrator/Delphic tour guide Theon diagnoses those who yearn for enigmatic speech to suffer from a childish affliction (πάθος) unworthy of the “high” and by his time apparently prose-based ritual of oracular consultation. For this Plutarchan narrator (which, owing to the length, rhetorical force, and intertextual agility of his diatribe, reflects with some probability the views of Plutarch, himself a priest of Apollo at Delphi), the association between childish behavior and divine ritual is deeply disturbing, especially how it seems to reverse the normal hierarchy of speech: because they are childish, they condescend the god. Remarking later on what exactly brought about the changes in the Pythia’s diction, Theon cites certain disreputable Priests of Serapis and Cybele whose poetic obscurity, a throwback to the oracle’s older style of speaking, appeals only to “slaves and little girls” and lends itself to “liars, sorcerers, and false prophets.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Plut. *De Pyth.* 407c.

These sorts of secondary discussions (which, granted, are not necessarily reliable in themselves) are complemented by literary representations of children encountering and producing enigmatic speech. Detienne and Vernant's classic discussion of cunning intelligence, which looks at the use of *mētis* terms in the literary record, cites a list of passages, including the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* that suggests how enigmatic speech is the purview of children.⁸⁸ In the *Banquet of the Seven Sages*, Plutarch tells the story of Cleoboulina, who is known as Eumetis for her cleverness.⁸⁹ Diogenes Laertius records that a book of riddles circulated in her name.⁹⁰ Though she never speaks for herself, her presence in the *Banquet* is unnerving to the assembled wise men. After having considered a wide body of riddling speech, including several oracles, superlative questions (what is best?), and finally, passages from the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, the *sophoi* bandy about a few of her riddles. Cleodorus then reflects upon the appropriateness of the silent onlooker Eumetis' riddling speech in such a way that both condescends her intelligence and relays his own unease about the potential for a reversal in the hierarchy of intelligent speech:

“Τί δὲ ταῦθ’,” ὁ Κλεόδωρος εἶπε, “διαφέρει τῶν Εὐμήτιδος αἰνιγμάτων; ἃ ταύτην μὲν ἴσως οὐκ ἀπρεπὲς ἐστὶ παίζουσιν καὶ διαπλέκουσιν ὥσπερ ἕτεραι ζωνία καὶ κεκρυφάλους προβάλλειν ταῖς γυναῖξιν, ἄνδρας δὲ νοῦν ἔχοντας ἐν τινὶ σπουδῇ τίθεσθαι γελοῖον.” Ἡ μὲν οὖν Εὐμητις ἡδέως ἂν εἰποῦσά τι πρὸς αὐτόν, ὥς ἐφαίνετο, κατέσχευ ἑαυτὴν ὑπ’ αἰδοῦς, καὶ ἀνεπλήσθη τὸ πρόσωπον ἐρυθρήματος (Plut. *conv. sept. sap.* 154b)

“But what difference is there,” said Cleodorus, “between things like this and Eumetis’ riddles? Perhaps it is not unbecoming for her to amuse herself and to weave these as other girls weave girdles and hair-nets, and to propound them to women, but the idea that men of sense should take them at all seriously is ridiculous.” Eumetis, to judge by her appearance, would have liked to give him an answer, but restrained herself with all modesty, and her face was covered with blushes. (trans. Babbitt)

⁸⁸ Detienne and Vernant (1991) 303-304.

⁸⁹ On the dialogue's manipulation of riddle contest material from several traditions, see Konstantakos (2004).

⁹⁰ Diog. Laert. I.89

The point here is that children who tell riddles are anomalous not so much in telling them as in telling them to adults and disrupting the notions of who should be able to speak with the authority of a *sophos*. Eumetis, showing good manners, refuses to speak to the older men, and in what follows it becomes the task of Aesop to enumerate some of her trickier *ainigmata* for the pleasure of the audience.⁹¹ The silence suits her societal role as a *parthenos*, but it also transforms her into an object of interpretation, a sort of *symbolon* for the group and for later readers. What does it mean that a *parthenos* can riddle in the same way, if not more skillfully, than the seven sages?

Indeed, this figure of the riddling *parthenos* is both especially productive and quite ancient.⁹² One of our earliest extant choral compositions, Alcman's Louvre Papyrus (*PMG* 1), has been analyzed as a riddling performance of children that works on the level of ritual. Peponi describes the text's deixis as a sustained invitation to cognition made by ritual actors, where interpretation is the difficult work of not a reader but a viewing audience, who are guided along by the enigmatic speech of the maidens:

Thus in the *Partheneion*, the chorus's report of what they perceive with their eyes acquires an intriguing function. On the one hand, through the repetitive use of verbs of sight, demonstrative pronouns, and articles, the chorus gives the impression of anchoring the speech in the field of deixis; at the same time, they show that the very act of being a spectator, of looking at the ritual agents Hagesichora and Agido, becomes meaningful only if the gaze directed at them sees them in a constant flow of imagery. In other words, while the deictic network is apparently dropping the anchor of the utterance into the deictic field that surrounds it, what it really does is lift that anchor and lead the mind's eye to sail on the sea of imagination.

⁹¹ It is interesting that Plutarch puts the defense of child riddling in the mouth of the representative of popular literature, perhaps alluding to the real practice of child riddling.

⁹² At Eur. *El.* 946; Electra uses the vocabulary of αἴνιγμα to demonstrate her shame for speaking at all. This is similar to how Eumetis never actually speaks in Plutarch's dialogue.

The maidens' extremely dense signifying speech creates and sustains their ritual identity, which is negotiated with the adult performance audience.⁹³ In speaking enigmatically and using forms such as allegory, fictional deixis, and contradiction, the maidens ritualize the performance by inverting the normal audience expectations about childhood intelligence.⁹⁴ Thus the Alcman Partheneion represents a special kind of child mediated enigmatic speech, one which, like Eumetis and the Pythia, uses the form of a child to engage with adult intelligence from a divine perspective.

The parthenic speaker occupies a ritualized role of speaking with authority to those who normally have authority over her; demonstrating her cunning even while normally she is denied it. It is for this reason that the parthenic riddler can be considered along the lines of the "child-centered" anthropological model of riddling. Insofar as she is a mantis, the speaker displays the superior perspective of divinity, which is encoded in the enigmatic utterance about the immortality of days. At the same time, in making these utterances not spontaneously but within the carefully orchestrated performance context of choral poetry, (written by a single adult poet) the performance can also be called kourotophic. The performance of choral poetry played a key role in education of children during archaic and classical Greece; thus learning and performing enigmatic speech represents a transfer of knowledge from one generation to another.

B. Features

Besides these three broader contexts for enigmatic speech in the Greek literary record, I want to highlight several features that I see as constitutive of enigmatic speech.

⁹³ See Calame (2001) 185-206.

⁹⁴ For a survey of these forms and the importance of fictional deixis, see Ferrari (2008) 70-126.

1. Wordplay/Etymologizing

A key substrate of enigmatic discourse is wordplay. Though not usually constitutive of enigmatic speech by itself, wordplay is the fundamental building block of enigmatic speech in the ancient world. Asserting the truth of a word's origin, meaning, and sound is quite often complicit in schemes that manipulate these truths so as to confound. Such is the case with the following riddling scenario recorded by Clearchus of Soli in his treatise *On Riddles* (4th c. BCE) and transmitted by Athenaeus.⁹⁵

ἐν δὲ τῷ Περὶ Γρίφων ὁ αὐτὸς Κλέαρχος φησιν ἑπτὰ εἶδη εἶναι γρίφων... ἐν ὀνόματι δέ, οἷον ἐροῦμεν ὀνόματα ἀπλᾶ ἢ σύνθετα δισύλλαβα, οὗ μορφή τις ἐμφαίνεται τραγικὴ ἢ πάλιν ταπεινὴ, ἢ ἄθεα ὀνόματα, οἷον Κλεώνυμος, ἢ θεοφόρα, οἷον Διονύσιος, καὶ τοῦτο ἦτοι ἐξ ἑνὸς θεοῦ ἢ πλεόνων, οἷον Ἑρμαφρόδιτος· ἢ ἀπὸ Διὸς ἄρχεσθαι, Διοκλῆς, ἢ Ἑρμοῦ, Ἑρμόδωρος· ἢ λήγειν εἰ τύχοι εἰς νικος. οἱ δὲ μὴ εἰπόντες ὥς προσετάττετο ἔπινον τὸ ποτήριον. καὶ ὁ μὲν Κλέαρχος οὕτως ὠρίσατο... (Ath.X.448d-e)

In his *On Riddles*, the same Clearchus claims that there are seven types of riddles... Next (are riddles that) involve specific nouns, for example when we are asked to come up with simple or compound bi-syllabic nouns whose form appears to be tragic or the opposite, colloquial; or with names that have no divine element in them, for example “Cleonymus,” or that contain a divine name, for example “Dionysius,” and in the latter case either the name of one god or of more than one, for example “Hermaphroditus”; or with names that begin with “Zeus,” for example, “Diocles,” or with “Hermes,” for example, “Hermodorus”; or perhaps with one that ends in “-nikos.” Anyone who failed to respond as requested drank the contents of the cup. This is how Clearchus defined the word [γρίφος]. (Trans. Olson, slightly modified)

This passage provides perhaps the best evidence of how antiquity perceived a conceptual link between etymologizing with telling riddles (here *griphoi*).⁹⁶ Also notable is that the riddling session's goal is not interpretation *per se* but exhaustion. That is to say, the symposiasts pay the

⁹⁵ See Luz (2010) 139-146 for a discussion of Athenaeus' digression on riddles; on Clearchus, Wehrli (1948) and Berra (2008) 386-404.

⁹⁶ See also Aemilianus' (the deipnosophist narrator's) subsequent claim on homonymy (453b): “The oldest riddle is based in language (λογικός), and is part and parcel with the nature of riddling ...[e.g.] ‘What is the same in heaven and on earth and under the sea?’ This is homonymy, since a bear and a snake and an eagle and a dog can all be found in heaven, on earth and in the sea.”

penalty not for failing to solve the etymological *griphos* (or likely, not only for), but for failing to “come up with” (ἐποῦμεν) a sufficient number of etymologies. This distinction, I argue, points to riddling speech as a cultural currency that was widespread in popularity and performance.

Wordplay in general, and etymologizing in specific, provides the raw material for those who speak enigmatically, a dynamic that obtains in many cultures.⁹⁷ Of course, Greek etymologizing often exists on its own, that is, separate from enigmatic speech. In Hellenistic poetry, etymologizing was constitutive of *technopaegnia*, the “skilled playfulness” deployed by scholar-poets such as Simias in creating *Formspiele*. I will consider in Chapter 3 how Pindar’s deployment of enigmatic devices extends a field of continuity between archaic and Hellenistic poetics, which are all too often, at least in certain key respects, over-periodized.

The long history of recognizing wordplay in Pindar’s commentary tradition offers to this study an ambiguous inheritance. For one, it makes my work much easier, as the tracking down and spelling out of these kinds of devices is intensive work and requires a keen ear. On the other hand, these identifications are always tenuous and are proposed under a hermeneutic of doubt. The commentary tradition’s musings on etymologizing are routinely condemned as Hellenistic over-interpretation and even lumped into the same category as the historicizing fabrications proposed as backstories to Pindar’s odes or to the poet himself.⁹⁸ As a result, scholarship that discusses etymologizing must always begin with a disclaimer. For example, James O’Hara writes in the introduction to his book on Vergilian etymological wordplay:

⁹⁷ See Pepicello and Green (1984) 91-111 on homophony and polysemy in riddles and also on metathesis (55-60).

⁹⁸ Heath (1993) with further references, who offers an alternate take on the usefulness of Pindaric scholia, with special attention to Nemean 7.

“Every scholar claiming to have discovered an example of poetic etymological wordplay must ask whether features of the text actually encourage the derivations of the words involved.”⁹⁹

This is reasonably stated, and as a rule, I follow O’Hara’s recommendation of certifying “features” of the text, by which he seems to have in mind his own delineation of categories (“Names of Gods”), formal features, and also “indicator words” (e.g., *nomen*; *apellavit*) that refer to an act of naming performed by the text.¹⁰⁰ All of these criteria are useful for appreciating and recognizing Pindaric wordplay. At the same time, I recognize in Pindar a larger set of *nomina realia* that provide potential wordplay targets than O’Hara does in Virgil. This difference is a generic one, since every epinician performance engaged with a set of names: the victor, his father and male relatives, the event, the games, the city, the mythical characters and divinities. The act of naming has long been recognized as a formalized component of epinician poetry.¹⁰¹ Thus it makes sense that playing with these names came to be the work of the poet and to varying degrees, an expectation of the audience.

In general, then, I am in agreement with O’Hara that in detecting wordplay, a degree of restraint is a virtue (and perhaps Bury ought to have taken this to heart in his fanciful study of Pindaric wordplay¹⁰²), but one detects behind this caution something more like nervousness, as if the detection of wordplay in a given text will somehow mar its pristine antiquity. Pindar thus runs the risk of becoming Ausonius, or even worse, fulfills the role posed for him by Athenaeus,

⁹⁹ O’Hara (1996) 6.

¹⁰⁰ O’Hara (1996) 57-102 lays out the following features that are useful to Pindaric wordplay (I have omitted those that I deem irrelevant, such as line position): 1. Paronomasia; 2. Single adjective gloss; 3. Etymologizing κατ’ἀντίφασιν (to gloss a word by its opposite); 4. Etymologizing of Proper Names; 5. Explicit Derivation; 6. Unnecessary naming constructions as etymological signposts; 7. Suppression: the wordplay target is never mentioned explicitly; 8. Etymologizing with languages other than Greek 9. Clustering; 10. Playing with tradition of earlier etymologizing.

¹⁰¹ See Bundy (2006) [1962] 7-10, and passim on the device of the “name cap” in epinician.

¹⁰² Bury (1888).

who called him a lover of wordplay and composer of asigmatic poetry (which omits the letter Σ, a feat that qualified for Athenaeus as a *griphos*).¹⁰³

On the other hand, perhaps this unease with wordplay has to do with modern attitudes about the critic's role. If one notices wordplay, or even worse, bases an argument on the existence of wordplay, his or her reading of the text becomes intensely idiosyncratic. Underlying this fear is the sense that etymological wordplay is a kind of Saussurean *hyponoia* or subtext, which threatens to render the text meaningful only to a select few. As I explore in Ch. 2, wordplay can indeed encode the values and behavior of an elite group, broadly defined. But it is also true that wordplay, is often composed, received, represented, and deciphered as a communal endeavor. In Ch. 3, I explore the deployment of wordplay in relation to several communal endeavors: the integration of an exile (O.12), the embarkation of a colony (P. 4), the praise of a localized religious authority (in P. 11 and P. 8), and more broadly speaking, the reintegration of athletes into society.

The most comprehensive work ever written on etymologizing in Pindar is that of J.H. Barkhuizen, whose dissertation cites over 100 examples of the phenomenon.¹⁰⁴ Many of these are unattested in the commentary tradition; many have remained unremarked upon to this day, perhaps because his work was never published or translated from Afrikaans. In order to make these accessible, I have compiled an appendix, which classifies Barkhuizen's examples along

¹⁰³ Ath. X.448d; 455b-c; 467b, and the clarifying discussion of D'Angour (1997).

¹⁰⁴ Barkhuizen (1975), written under the direction of the Pindarist W.J. Verdenius. Barkhuizen adopts the headings *Nomina Propria*, *Nomina Geografica*, and *Nomina Varia*. Of these, the final is the least convincing in my judgment, as it attempts to draw connections between instances of words separated by a great number of intervening lines. Though ring composition or sound patterns in any Greek literature should not be ruled out, Pindaric scholarship in particular the work of Metzger, often pursued these connections to excess. Even less justifiable is the final section's identification of wordplay in cases where similar ideas are expressed at length. For example, the beginning of Olympian 1, which uses the image of fire to describe the victor's fame over several lines. But this cannot be called wordplay or etymologizing in any meaningful sense. I discuss the beginning of Olympian 1 below pp. 166-174.

with the other major discussions of Pindaric etymologizing and then opines on their plausibility. (I have included what I see as “implausible” examples for reasons I lay out in the Appendix in order that my methods are clear and to foster response/disagreement.) Unfortunately, the standards set out by Barkhuizen are overbroad. For example, he sees a main criterion for etymological wordplay as *assonansie* (= “paronomasia”) or the similarity of sounds between two words, even if these are quite a few lines apart.¹⁰⁵

By contrast, I follow O’Hara in understanding that the difference between paronomasia and etymology is the extent to which a claim is made about the connections (physical, notional, or otherwise) between the two words being played upon.¹⁰⁶ On this spectrum, paronomasia is potentially more meaningful than the sound play of assonance, while etymology makes some kind of claim about the origin or essence of a proper name, word, or idea. Each of these is a kind of wordplay and can work together when performed in quick succession, as is the case in many Pindaric texts. Especially in these cases of what O’Hara terms “clustering,” it can be difficult to identify whether a particular example illustrates soundplay or etymology.¹⁰⁷ Thus a “spectrum” is a better way to conceptualize the relationship between these kinds of wordplay, although for the sake of clarity I tend to privilege a distinction between the two, giving whenever possible specific reasons for why a figure represents an etymology.

The other reason for privileging examples of etymologizing is that it speaks to audience expectations about how a poetic speaker creates and claims ownership of cognitive space. The idea of “etymology revealing essence” is deeply rooted in Greek literature, from Homer to Pindar’s fifth century context.¹⁰⁸ For the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus,

¹⁰⁵ Barkhuizen (1975) 192 – the term seems to connote for him more than the similarity of *vowel* sounds.

¹⁰⁶ O’Hara (1996) 57-63.

¹⁰⁷ O’Hara (1996) 92-95

¹⁰⁸ For an overview of Homeric wordplay, see O’Hara (1996) 7-12. The standard treatment remains Rank (1951).

etymologizing revealed glimpses of the true, contradictory nature of the universe. Though Heraclitus' etymologies (and those of his followers) were lampooned in Plato's *Cratylus* as the products of overly playful mind, they are in fact indicative of a broad strand of thinking in Archaic and classical Greek thought, as I explore in Chapter 1.¹⁰⁹

2. Elemental Sequences

Specialists of epinician poetry recognize the device called "priamel" to be an essential feature of the genre.¹¹⁰ It is curious, however, that, despite its prominence in Greek literature, the ancient rhetoricians had no specific term for the device, as the term derives from the Germanized name of a medieval genre, the *praeambulum*. Because of this lack of an adequate definition, William Race, in his comprehensive overview of the form, describes the priamel in relation to other rhetorical tropes known to ancients and to ourselves, such as metaphor, gnome, and proverb. This study takes Race's project of contextualization further, arguing that a certain set of priamels found in Pindar and Bacchylides should be considered as enigmatic forms, on the grounds that they build complex ratios between terms that demand the reader to question the meaning of terms and engage in the kind of abstract thought that is characteristic of solving riddles.¹¹¹ Once again, the emphasis will not be on the form per se, but rather how the text constructs the cognitive work of the audience.

A comparison between terms, words, sounds, or ideas is, within the broader scope of enigmatic speech, very common. Of course, metaphor, simile, metonymy, kenning, etc. are all

¹⁰⁹ On the *Cratylus*, see Silverman (1992); Kahn (1973).

¹¹⁰ Beginning with Dornseiff (1921) 97-99; Bundy (2006) [1962] 4-10 developed the basic classification scheme; Race (1982).

¹¹¹ Race (1982) 86 acknowledges that the priamel should be considered as close to a riddle in form, yet elsewhere (1981) he is very quick to dismiss possible symbolic or allegorical interpretations for Olympian 1's opening.

comparative *figures* that find a home in Greek enigmatic speech. But to make direct comparisons among items of a list is at once a more primitive and more sophisticated form than these figures. Primitive in the sense that lists are stripped of supplemental information and context; their syntax tends toward parataxis over hypotaxis; they serve quotidian uses and without a second thought, are discarded amid the wastes of Oxyrhynchus.¹¹² On the other hand, lists are sophisticated and difficult – perhaps not always to their original authors – but to interpreters who lack contextual information such as headings or more explicit forms of accounting. Certain literary lists such as epic catalogues were particularly difficult or demanding in oral performance and thus demonstrated the competency of those who articulated them, as is still the case today with those who memorize and perform large chunks of text.¹¹³

In Pindar’s archaic Greece, one such list centered around the question of ultimate value, or rather the various permutations of that question: What is best? What is most just? What is most noble?¹¹⁴ Within epinician, a genre that celebrates superlatives, this focus is not unique to the beginning of Olympian 1 (cf. N. 4.1). Moreover, in the interest of *saphēnizein Pindaron ex Pindarou*, the concept of contingent bests is found in the catalogue of Olympian 10, which lists the supposedly original victors of the first contest at Olympia.¹¹⁵ Therefore, as Race argues, if there is anything that approximates enigmatic speech in a Pindaric priamel it ought to be possible to describe what makes it different than these other value lists in Pindar. I attempt to provide

¹¹² Compare three famous Greek riddles that are presented as lists: the riddle of the sphinx (first four then two then three; *AP* XIV.101; the Platonic riddle (*Rep.* 479b) “a man that is not a man”, etc, see further West (2007) 368-369 and above pp. 27-28; and the Homer proto-riddle of the Helios’ cattle, as discussed by West (2007) 371-372.

¹¹³ I have in mind those who attain *hafiz* status in Islam; for the idea of verbal competence in performance, see Briggs (1988).

¹¹⁴ E.g. Simon. *PMG* 542, 651 (cf. adesp. *PMG* 890); Tyrtaeus fr. 12 W; Sappho fr. 16 FLP; Xenophanes fr. 2 W; Thgn. 255-256, 1063-1068; Praxilla fr. 747; also later texts including Eur. *Ba.* 877-881; Iambl. *VP* 83 (= Schultz 117-118); Diog. Laert. I.77; in later parody, Diphilus *Theseus* fr. 49 (= Ath. X.451 b-c) and Ath. X.457d, in contrast to οἱ παλαιοί.

¹¹⁵ O. 10.64-73: σταδίου μὲν ἀρίστεισεν εὐθὺν τόνον/ ποσσὶ τρέχων παῖς ὁ Λικυμνίου/ Οἰωνός: “The winner of the stadion, as he ran the straight stretch with his feet, was Licymnius’ son, Oionus,” (tr. Race)

such analysis in discussions of the famous priamel of Olympian 1 and Bacchylides 3; though as I explain, I understand them to represent two different kinds of enigmatic speech.

3. Fable and *Ainos*

The principal term in Greek for a fable is *ainos*, though some writers, such as Herodotus, preferred *logos*.¹¹⁶ Similar to the study of riddles, scholars interested in Greek fables have long questioned the semantic range of the terms and the generic boundaries of the form. The broadest understanding of *ainos* belongs to Gregory Nagy, who considers the term to refer not only to embedded fables but also more generally to an “authoritative speech act.”¹¹⁷ Nagy’s discussion is especially important for this study, as his work aims to situate the relationship of Pindar to Homer and many other kinds of text, including Aesop and Herodotus, all of which he defines as a kind of *ainos*. Pindaric *ainos*, which characterizes the entire epinician corpus, is for Nagy a pervasive and all-important mode of discourse, which encodes meaning by communicating directly to *philoï* but indirectly to *echthroï*.

On the other hand, Leslie Kurke views Nagy’s genre-encompassing definition of *ainos* as overbroad, remarking, “If everything is *ainos*, it ceases to be a useful explanatory category.”¹¹⁸ Kurke prefers to restrict the term to specific instances and speaking contexts within the Aesopic tradition. My own understanding of *ainos* owes much to Nagy: fables can speak to a small, elite group, as I describe in Chapter 2. At the same time, I agree with Kurke in denying that *ainos* describes the character of a work or genre as a whole, and I do not agree with Nagy that *ainos* speaks directly to *philoï* only. Rather, *ainoi* are offered by the poetic speaker as sites of dialogue

¹¹⁶ See Kurke (2011) 400-404 with further references.

¹¹⁷ Nagy (1990) 146-150.

¹¹⁸ Kurke (2011) 374.

for the performance audience in conjunction with one or more of the contexts and features described above.

4. Dialogue

From the preceding discussion, it emerges that enigmatic speech encompasses quite a wide range of contexts and forms. One might reasonably ask what makes these individual items constitutive of enigmatic speech; or conversely: when is wordplay or a priamel, for example, *not* constitutive of enigmatic speech? For the purposes of this study, the defining criterion of enigmatic speech is the presence of direct address or dialogue along with a context or feature described above. Of course, the term “dialogue” is itself broad. With reference to enigmatic speech already adduced, dialogue can refer to the vaunt of one contestant to another in the Homeric *Contest*; the speech of the Pythia to an oracular consultant; the conversation of animals within a fable; the shibboleth *akousmata* of the Pythagoreans, and the question and answer form of proper riddles. Dialogue can also be one-sided, for example, the direct address that an epinician speaker makes to a laudandus, his clan, or city. Similarly, direct address does not always constitute a dialogue, but in epinician, when a speaker uses direct address represents a response to another individual or group, such a speech act can certainly represent a dialogue. Dialogue can also be “notional;” Rather than speaking to a human interlocutor, the speaker might address a literary tradition or a generalized class of interpreters.

This approach may seem overbroad and lacking a theoretical precision; after all, isn’t it true that every word in an epinician ode conducts a dialogue insofar as it is notionally addressed to a laudandus? Such a definition might suit Mikhail Bakhtin, who famously thought that all language was dialogic. But as Simon Goldhill notes, “Bakhtin rarely writes with any detailed attention on ancient dialogues, for all that he privileges ancient history and the term dialogue...

‘The dialogic’ expresses the ludic power that is released when multiple viewpoints interact.”¹¹⁹ Indeed, this study is very much interested in “ludic power” and the reaction of viewpoints to one another. What follows is a description of the study’s structure, which inquires into enigmatic speech as a site of dialogue.

C. Argument Summary

The dissertation argues that the Pindaric text deploys enigmatic speech to stage three types of dialogue: 1.) intertextual 2.) elite 3.) communal. What do I mean by “staging a dialogue”? Epinician poetry was performed by a chorus but is generally “monologic” (one *persona loquens* sung by a chorus). Thus while many kinds of enigmatic speech engage in conversation, the enigmatic speech found in epinician poetry is generally a one-sided “dialogue” staged in conversation with a notional interlocutor for the performance community. Here follows a summary of each dialogue type, with attention to the notional conversation partner(s), the subject matter, and the possible social functions of such a staging.

In Chapter 1, I argue that when enigmatic speech performs an intertextual dialogue, it speaks in one of two ways to other authors, texts, or text-based performances such as victory celebrations. On the one hand, intertextual dialogue achieved through enigmatic speech is often adversative and competitive, in the same way that the deployment of enigmatic speech was portrayed as a competition between canonical authors such as the contest of Homer and Hesiod; Euripides and Aeschylus; etc. This staging allows the identification of the victory event with poetic prowess: objective concerns are united with subjective ones. As the Pindaric speaker

¹¹⁹ Goldhill (2008) 9.

competes and wins against other poets, texts, and performances, so did the victor compete against various adversaries. On the other hand, enigmatic dialogue can name a predecessor or predecessors as exemplary model texts, as the opening of Nemean 6 does. Such a move casts the Pindaric speaker's performance as the offspring of a long line of such poetic performances, and the victor with a long familial line of victors. Both dialogues are achieved in the Pindaric text through the use of enigmatic speech.

In Chapter 2, I argue that when enigmatic speech stages an elite dialogue, the text addresses a small group of interpreters, such as *sunetoi* or *sophoi*. While the primary semantic field of such terms is cognitive ("those who understand," "wise ones," "poets"), these terms are deeply associated with the elite members of archaic Greek *poleis* and point to the esteem in which the traditional *aiodos* was held. The distinction between notional "address to" and "staging for" is crucial here, as I do not mean to imply that the text always speaks directly to or for *sophoi*, or that elites are the only ones capable of understanding or producing enigmatic speech. Indeed, it is often the case that dialogue addressed to elites is staged for the concerns of a broader non-elite community. The chapter considers dialogues that address elite concerns and values, such as the management and embeddedness of wealth; and the political competition between elites. I also examine the use of fabular material to speak to multiple audiences simultaneously.

Finally, in Chapter 3, I explore how enigmatic speech can stage a communal dialogue. In this type of dialogue, the enigmatic speaker designates as interlocutors a larger, though often still localized community. The difference between this type and the previous is in the broadness of address and the withholding of potential solutions in favor of deliberation and the staging of multiple solutions. The model text here is the Herodotean text's staging of solutions to the

Delphic oracle, and a Hellenistic epigram's weighing of possible riddle solutions. By performing enigmatic speech as a communal endeavor, the Pindaric text offers a way for the victor and the epinician community to enter into conversation with one another, thus integrating the victory with broader communal concerns.

Overall, this study shows that even in a traditionally "difficult" poet such as Pindar, enigmatic speech engages texts, individuals and communities in conversation rather than presenting a barrier to understanding. By appreciating these literary and social dynamics, we gain new insights into the creation and negotiation of value in Pindar and antiquity.

Chapter 1: Enigmatic Speech as Literary Dialogue

οὐ μέ τις ἐξ ὀρέων ἀποφώλιος ἀγροιώτης
αἰρήσει κλήθρην, αἰρόμενος μακέλην·
ἀλλ' ἐπέων εἰδὼς κόσμον καὶ πολλὰ μογήσας
μύθων παντοίων οἶμον ἐπιστάμενος. (Philetas fr. 8 Lightfoot)

No country bumpkin from the hills
will get me, an alder tree, by swinging a mattock,
but rather by knowing the intricacy of poetry and by toiling greatly
to master the path of all kinds of tales.

This brief *paignion* of the Hellenistic poet Philetas of Cos displays several hallmarks of proper riddles, including an *oggetto parlante*, the image of the path (οἶμον 4), and wordplay via ambiguity of the verb *hairēsei* in line 2, which can mean both to remove physically and to apprehend mentally (and thus in English colloquially “to get”). Many solutions have been proposed about what the alder tree symbolizes, for example, the bucolic poet’s staff or perhaps a writing tablet.¹ But enigmatic speech sometimes obscures the question it is asking. As Jan Kwapisz recently remarked, we should not be asking what the alder tree means, but rather which alder tree in particular is speaking.²

On its face, such a strategy may seem absurd, but commentators have “found” the tree by noting the specifically Homeric and Odyssean language of this epigram’s final two lines. Thus “toiling greatly” (πολλὰ μογήσας 3) echoes the *Odyssey* proem’s famous description of its hero (πολλὰ...πάθεν ἄλγεα *Od.* 1.4), while knowing the *kosmos* of *epea* describes both the speaker’s knowledge of epic poetry (*epea*) and Odysseus’ own abilities as a storyteller. As Giovanni Cerri has discussed, the word for “alder tree” only occurs twice in Homer, both times in the *Odyssey*,

¹ On these interpretations, see Sbardella (2000) 127-136 and Hubbard (1998) 24-26.

² Kwapisz (2016) 160.

specifically, in descriptions of Odysseus' boat building on Calypso's isle.³ Building material for Odysseus thus becomes enigmatic material for Philetas, and Odysseus' bulwark against a death at sea is also salvation for Philetas' symposiast interlocutors who, upon failing the riddle, would perhaps have had to drink brine.

The extent to which we choose to credit Cerri's brilliant solution to this *ainigma* will depend on how we assess the relationship of Philetas' text to other texts such as Homer's. Is this an example of competitive capping, where a later poet draws attention to his mastery of and thus innovation over "archaic" predecessors such as Homer? In such a reading, Homer is rather like the "country bumpkin" in the initial line, while Philetas' persona and his interlocutor are like the ones who have "mastery" over words. Alternatively, perhaps the poetic speaker shows by this riddle that his way of speaking perpetuates a very old manipulation of language, one near and dear to Homer's Odysseus, who was himself a master of "all kinds of tales." Is Homer unfashionable or exemplary for Philetas?⁴

The present chapter argues that enigmatic speech in Pindar stages intertextual dialogue in relation to literary predecessors including Homer, according to a similar dichotomy. In Nemean 7, the speaker sets his own enigmatic style as exemplary, while impugning that of Homer. Thus the Pindaric text's use of enigmatic speech is potentially allusive and antagonistic in the same way as riddle contests such as the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* and the Aristophanic contest of Euripides vs. Aeschylus in the *Frogs*. By contrast, Nemean 6 offers enigmatic speech as a site of dialogue that affirms the value of literary predecessors, and the text models a field of continuity with the remote literary past.

³ Cerri (2005).

⁴ On this kind of dialogic indeterminability see e.g., Hinds (1998) 100-104.

Fascinatingly, given these two very different, even contradictory postures, each ode is explicit about enacting the same functions: celebration and commemoration, whose object encompasses the victory event, the victor himself, and the victor's clan. Thus in epinician any dialogue with the literary past must also dialogue with the historical or mythological past of the victor. As I discuss below, subjective and objective concerns find a union in enigmatic speech. This discursive work is important because it demonstrates that enigmatic speech is integral to the literary and social embeddedness of epinician poetry, rather than a kind of obscurantist window-dressing. To put it plainly: Because it defines the relationship of literary past with present, enigmatic speech matters and is essential to the creation of value in epinician poetry.

A. Nemean 7: True Names and the Unity of Opposites

The seventh Nemean ode has always enjoyed its share of controversy, at least ever since a scholion recorded that Pindar had offended the Aeginetans through his portrayal of their ancestor Neoptolemus in another poem (Paeon 6) and offered this one in recompense.⁵ At the outset of this section, I summarize the controversy and approaches to the poem in order to distinguish my own, which is perhaps unique in its consideration of comparative material, but remains at the same time heavily indebted to previous work.

⁵ Σ N. 7.150a: "According to Aristodemus Pindar was criticized by the Aeginetans for seeming to say in the Paeans that Neoptolemus came to Delphi to rob the temple, and so now he now offers a defense by saying that he did not die robbing the temple but was killed because of the meat on a point of honor" (tr. Heath (1993) 180). The scholiast's hypothesis has enjoyed its share of support over the centuries. After the publication of Paeon 6 in, the apology hypothesis was argued for by Wilamowitz (1908) 328-352 and refined by Schadewaldt (1928) 259-343. His position was questioned by Tugendhat (1960), who argued that the myth in the epinician is different enough to be separate from that of the paeon but, nevertheless, that the final lines of the epinician do imply an apology on behalf of the poet. This careful reading is affirmed by Lloyd-Jones (1973), Carey (1981), and Most (1985). On the other hand Slater (1969, 2001) takes the more radical position that the line in question could not have signified any apology, on the basis of how Greek verbal negation works, as discussed below, p. 69 n. 54.

On the face of it, there is nothing inherently problematic with understanding intertextual links between poetic compositions of the same poet. In certain cases, self-quotation even encourages this kind of reading, for example, when a version of the opening to Olympian 1 reappears in Olympian 3.⁶ With a myth similar in subject to Paean 6, Nemean 7 offers ample opportunity for connections to be drawn. Moreover, epinicia are conversant with historical events outside of the athletic victory proper, and as I described in the Introduction, *realia* such as names past or future epinician performances did offer such possibilities to the epinician poet. The problem with the intertextual, historicizing interpretation of this poem in particular is that the scholiasts are unlikely to have had any more information than we do about the circumstances of either performance.⁷ While it is true that the treatment of Neoptolemus in Nemean 7 is different and possibly more negative than in Paean 6, it is not necessary and certainly not sufficient to read with the scholiasts and certain modern commentators the rhetorical *telos* of apology hanging behind every line.⁸ In sum, the skepticism of the currently prevailing position has to do with separating authorial intentions from performance reception, a worthy critical aim of the past several decades.⁹

My own reading of the poem stresses a style rather than a *telos*: the production of enigmatic speech and ancillary devices including wordplay and etymologizing. Whereas ancient hearers, readers, and poets would have been unlikely to recognize or understand modern critical assessments stressing the unification of a text around a single aim, they readily trafficked in and authorized the power of ludic readings engendered by linguistic play. Of course, these two

⁶ O. 3.42.

⁷ Heath (1993) 191-3.

⁸ E.g., Most (1985).

⁹ On skepticism concerning the relationship between the poems, see Kowalzig (2007) 193-195, 221-3 and Kurke (2005) and (2011) 77-84.

categories of interpretation are not mutually exclusive: games, riddles, and jokes can certainly “have a point.” My argument is simply that playfulness is much more accessible (recognizable, marked, puzzling) to us as a subtext than is intent or purpose, and thus we should start with this lower hermeneutic instead of imposing a single implied meaning behind every utterance.¹⁰

In the course of discussing etymological wordplay, I do offer a partial solution for the meaning of the end of the poem, which complicates but does not definitively rule out a connection to Paean 6. We simply do not know enough about the circumstances of Nemean 7’s performance and the interpersonal relationships of Pindar the historical figure to answer honestly this longstanding (and in my judgment, rather uninteresting) question. But we do have the abundance of wordplay contained in the text itself, which raises questions about the narrator’s self-presentation. Thus the lack of socio-historical network is compensated for by the text’s deep entanglement with another network, the longstanding tradition of producing and consuming enigmatic speech. In order to demonstrate the interaction of this text with said network, I offer the substantial intertexts of the writings of the Ionian philosopher Heraclitus, the sympotic poetry of the Theognidean corpus, and certain riddle forms recorded in the *Greek Anthology*, all of which are exemplary for the Pindaric speaker’s style. Though diachronically diverse, each of these intertexts sheds light on the self-presentation of the narrator as enigmatic. Thus the discussion emphasizes the continuity of certain *topoi* and self-presentation of the enigmatic tradition.

In Nemean 7, the narrator describes his role as that of poet, one who weaves the garlands of the Muse and is deeply conversant with earlier poetic tradition. The manipulation of names, sounds, and concepts are of recurrent, even dominant importance to this text. For example, the

¹⁰ Though it is also perhaps worth pointing out that the sheer quantity of playfulness I understand in the poem would work to complicate the sincerity of any apology offered by the speaker.

names of the victor's father "Thearion," their clan name "Euxenidae," the noun "justice," and, as I will argue, the name "Neoptolemus" are each played upon by the narrator, who stresses several times the importance of understanding of names and signs. More specifically, each name offers an example of "the unity of opposites." That this frame is essential for the kind of naming inherent to enigmatic speech will emerge by the intertexts adduced.

Ultimately, I argue that the truth behind the etymological wordplay in Nemean 7 derives not from Apollo but from the narrator's self-presentation as an enigmatic speaker who positions himself against his greatest poetic precedent, Homer and the living Homeric tradition. By engaging in this anti-Homer dialectic, the Pindaric narrator assumes a poetic stance typical of the enigmatic tradition as a whole, a tradition that revealed in Homer's apparent obscurity and was responsible, so the story goes, for his death. In order to describe from where the "truth" behind these True Names derives, I first analyze the etymological plays in Nemean 7 with special attention to how they speak to the unity of opposites (1-3), and then discuss the difficult final lines of the poem in light of this enigmatic form (4).

1. Life as Light and Darkness: Sogenes or Thearion?

The playful persona of the speaker emerges from the beginning of Nemean 7, which already contains the seeds of wordplay:

ἄνευ σέθεν
οὐ φάος, οὐ μέλαιναν δρακέντες εὐφρόναν
τεὰν ἀδελφεὰν ἐλάχομεν ἀγλαόγυιον Ἥβαν. (N. 7.2-4)

Without you [Eleithuia, goddess of childbirth]
—seeing not the light, seeing not the black night—
we would not have obtained by lot your sister, radiant-limbed Hebe.

Commentators tend to take these lines as an elaboration of the common “vision as life” formula, a motif which usually only incorporates the positive terms of vision, light, brilliance etc.¹¹ The lines certainly do draw upon the old Greek idea, present in Homer, of life as vision.¹² One also detects in this statement a sort of inversion of the proverb “Best is not to be born at all,” which is quoted in many places in Greek literature and once even in another epinician alongside the vision-as-life metaphor.¹³ Thus to begin with a consideration of birth is a well-established encomiastic technique, since it allows the poet to move from the most general of human conditions (birth) to the unique qualities of the victor, a device that Glenn Most has termed the “Principle of Individuation.”¹⁴

But this opposition between light and darkness can be understood as more than the restatement of conventional wisdom or a variation on standard encomiastic technique.¹⁵ Given the wider context of the poem, I argue that these lines represent the first instance of a specific enigmatic idea: the unity of opposites. The unity of light and darkness, or night and day, within a single conceptual frame fascinated archaic thinkers like Heraclitus and the cultural tradition

¹¹ E.g., Carey (1981) 138.

¹² E.g., *Il.* 18.61

¹³ Bacchyl. 5.160-162: θνατοῖσι μὴ φῶναι φέριστον/ μὴδ’ ἀελίου προσιδεῖν/ φέγγος “For mortals it is best not to be born nor to look upon the light of the sun.” Elsewhere, most famously, the gnome appears in the lessons of Solon to Croesus at *Hdt.* I.31 the speech of Oedipus at *S. OC* 1224-1225, the speech of Euripides’ Bellerophon (*Nauck fr.* 285.1-2), and *Thgn.* 425-428. See also below pp. 167-168, where the idea is posed as the answer to a riddling question in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*.

¹⁴ Most (1985) 136f.

¹⁵ In Pindar, a similar figure occurs at *N.* 6.6. Further parallels are discussed by Carey (1981) 138.

behind the riddles of the *Greek Anthology*.¹⁶ It seems to have fascinated Pindar as well, as the fragments of a paean he wrote on the occasion of an eclipse indicate.¹⁷

That this enigmatic idea is complemented by a wordplay has always exercised commentators, but there is some disagreement as to what words actually constitute the play. The scholiast proposed that a pun on the name of the victor Sogenes (“safe birth”) is invoked by the prooimion to Eleithuia, the goddess of childbirth.¹⁸ This may be relevant to the initial two lines, since designating Eleithuia as “child of Hera, bearer of children” (παῖ ... Ἡρας, γενέτειρα τέκνων) rings somewhat pleonastic. At the same time, appearances of the goddess of birth are fairly common in epinician, and there is nothing in these lines to suggest the other half of the victor’s name “safe,” although certainly, given the infant mortality rate, any successful birth in antiquity is deserving of such a descriptor.¹⁹ Apparently not satisfied with this straightforward meaning, Aristodemus conjectured that Sogenes was born to Thearion late in life and thus became the “savior of his race” in ensuring the continuity of his line.²⁰

Separate from both these views, I would argue that the prooimion does not fixate upon birth so much as the transition to youth and more specifically, the visualization of this transition (δρακέντες... ἀγλαόγυιον 3-4). A more likely candidate for etymological wordplay than the

¹⁶ For Heraclitus, see e.g., Kahn XIX (= D-K 57), which criticizes Hesiod for not knowing that night and day are not opposed entities but components of one larger twenty-four hour period. For a relevant parallel among the folk tradition see e.g., *AP* XIV.41, which encodes the relationship between night and day as birth (the inverse of N. 7’s prooimion):

Μητέρ’ ἐμὴν τίκτω καὶ τίκτομαι· εἰμὶ δὲ ταύτης
ἄλλοτε μὲν μείζων, ἄλλοτε μειότερη.

“I bring forth my mother and am born from her, and I am sometimes larger, sometimes smaller than she is.”
(answer: day/night) cf. also *AP* XIV.40

¹⁷ *Pa.* 9. For a comprehensive account of the eclipse in archaic poetry see Rutherford (2001) 192-193.

¹⁸ *Σ* N7.1a Barkhuizen (1975) 80-82; Heath (1992) 171-172, Young (1970b) 636, who cites in support an epigram of Simonides (Bergk⁴ 168), which also plays on the σω- root, and was known to ancient commentators such as Aristodemus (*Σ* N 7.1a). This shows not that Nemean 7 alludes to Simonidean epigram, but rather that the name did offer opportunities for onomastic play.

¹⁹ For the goddess of birth invoked in Pindar, see *O.* 6.42 (Iamos); *P.* 3.9; *Pa.* 12.17 (Apollo and Artemis)

²⁰ See the discussion of Heath (1993) 171.

name of the victor is therefore that of his father, Thearion, whose name can be derived from the verb *theaomai* (“to see or witness”) and who appears prominently within the naming complex towards the end of the prooimion.²¹ This name holds special significance as well for Aeginetans, since it was at one time the name of a special shrine attached to the Temple of Apollo, which according to Bruno Currie was not only a feasting hall but also a sacred precinct of Delphic ground which received Delphic officials and from which emissaries were sent to participate in the panhellenic Theoxenia.²² Whether or not a building with such a purpose stood in Pindar’s day, we can be confident about the existence of the civic office of *theōria*, whose holders were sent to Delphi in order to, among other things, convey and interpret oracular speech.²³ Pindar does later in the poem praise Thearion’s *sunesis* “understanding” or perhaps even interpretive skills.²⁴

While fascinating in its own right, the possible Apolline context of the name-play should be regarded as secondary to the explicit dialogue setting of the passage. The text invites us to share the gaze of the narrator from the poem’s beginning. This gaze valorizes above all the physical beauty of the young victor who partakes of “glorious-limbed Youth” (ἀγλαόγυιον ἦβαν 4). As explained in the Introduction, one dynamic of enigmatic speech the literary record

²¹ σὺν δὲ τὴν
καὶ παῖς ὁ **Θεαρίωνος** ἀρετᾷ κριθεὶς
εὐδοξος αἰδεῖται Σωγένης μετὰ πενταέθλοις. (6-8)

“But with you [Eleithuia], the child namely [καὶ] of **Thearion**, having been acclaimed for excellence, is sung famous –Sogenes!—in the pentathlon.”

²² Currie (2005) 331-340. The argument that Thearion, the victor’s father, was one such official remains unconvincing because Currie relies solely on the fact that the clan name of the victor, *Euxenidae*, suggests a hereditary office of *proxenos*.

²³ Certainly, a building near the Temple of Apollo on Aegina called the thearion did exist in Pindar’s time, as indicated by N 3 69-70 and excavations, on which see Walter-Karydi (1994) 134-138 and more generally on Aeginetan religious identity (2006). Whether this building was an instrument of Theoria remains difficult to prove. For this institution in the early fifth century, see Thgn. 805-810 and Kowalzig (2007) 81-83.

²⁴ N. 7.60, and see the discussion next chapter of σύνεσις as a term signifying class and comprehension of riddling utterances.

is when children engage in riddling games; here it is not the child victor, but the speaker's response to the child that initiates this dialogue.

Therefore, in addition to being the sort of personalized language we might expect in a poem composed for a child victor, these initial lines capture and enact the erotic gaze of the symposium, one of the only places where youths and adults are represented as conversing with one another and the setting for numerous examples of enigmatic speech. To be clear, I am not arguing that the symposium was where the poem was first performed. That would be unlikely, given the balance of evidence even in the prooimion, where the polis of Aegina is called “performance loving” (φιλόμολπον 9), and thus the entire festival-going population is invoked as a potential audience for the ode. Instead, I argue that these lines transmit to a generalized audience the idea of *paideia* or elite education, one of the cornerstones of sympotic discourse.²⁵

How do these lines engage with the idea of *paideia*? As with the hymnal invocation to the goddess Birth, the speaker here casts as wide a net as possible, this time in his acknowledgment of what everyone in the city craves:

μάλα δ' ἐθέλοντι σύμπειρον ἀγωνία θυμὸν ἀμφέπειν
They want very much to foster a spirit honed in competition (N. 7.10)

The lines evoke a feeling of *Zusammenheit*, which must be nurtured (ἀμφέπειν), presumably in the polis at large and as a reputation abroad, but also in the minds of the elite young who aspire to the heights of Sogenes' “fine deeds” (ἔργοις καλοῖς 14). The diffusion of this common competitive spirit is given as the *Sieg* → *Lied* mechanism, Pindar's own poetry and the performance thereof, all of which is conveyed by the following line: “if someone accomplishes something, he tosses sweet-minded subject matter into the streams of the Muses” (11-12). Poetic inspiration is thereby something almost automatic or subject to the laws of nature. It is also vital:

²⁵ Levine (1985) 177-180.

the performance of songs (ῥυμῶν 13), we are told, staves off darkness, bringing light both commemorative and educative to great deeds.

Just as the wide net of “everyone is born” was revealed as foil for the singular birth of a victor, this broadly generalizing statement about poetic production is revealed to be foil for the speaker’s own method. When line 14 is uttered, we hear from the speaker in his own words what exactly he is doing by writing poetry for choral performance that sets his activity apart from other poets or even other modes of artistic representation:

ἔργοις δὲ καλοῖς ἔσοπτρον ἴσαμεν ἐνὶ σὺν τρόπῳ,
εἰ Μναμοσύνας ἑκατι λιπαράμπυκος
εὔρηται ἄποινα μόχθων κλυταῖς ἐπέων ἀοιδαῖς. (N. 7.14-16)

But I know a mirror for beautiful deeds in one way:
if through bright-banded Memory,
recompense for suffering is found in strains of poetry made famous.

The idea of performative poetry as a mirror is rich and creates exciting possibilities for enigmatic speech, which the speaker, having already made a pun on vision, will go on to exploit. To understand these, let us first consider the source of the metaphor, which is not original to Pindar. The fifth century rhetorical dichotomy between speech and deeds is well known (e.g. in Thucydides), but this comparison hearkens back to an earlier formulation of the dichotomy as a mirror. As far as I can tell, its first enunciation belongs to Solon, who is reported in the biographical tradition to have said that his speech was an image of deeds.²⁶ Thus, by using this metaphor, the speaker compares himself positively to the sages in respect to his mental acuity. Accordingly, his performance of poetry is a cognitive act (ἴσαμεν 14): not “I have a mirror” but “I know a mirror.” It is in this cognitive frame that etymological wordplay and enigmatic discourse find a home in Nemean 7.

²⁶ Diog. Laert. I.58.9: “Solon said that speech is the image of deeds.” (ἔλεγε δὲ τὸν μὲν λόγον εἰδολὼν εἶναι τῶν ἔργων); see also the discussion of Ford (2002) 94-97 on the archaic idea of the poem as an image (εἰκόν).

As most commentators will point out, the mirror in Greek literature holds largely positive connotations.²⁷ The standard view is succinctly put by Carey: “Greek metaphorical mirrors are always positive..., true image rather than mere reflection. So it is here, where song is the means to represent achievement truly, the only way to reflect great deeds.”²⁸ But that is not the whole story. A prestige object of some value, the mirror was also a favorite subject of riddle writers in antiquity – two riddles in the *Greek Anthology* and one from Symphosius are recorded on the object.²⁹ Mirrors, we learn from the enigmatic tradition, faithfully capture and reflect objective reality; they cannot lie or even speak for themselves. At the same time, however truthful they may be, the visual phenomena they record are transitory and limited in viewing aspect. As such, mirrors do not represent a distillation of truth or objective reality; their visual phenomena must be observed and interpreted like any other. In this way, mirrors are a kind of *sēma* or sign. Not only is correct interpretation of *sēmata* necessary, but their viewer must select, by synthesis, discernment or some other cognitive process, one image out of a whole slew of possibilities in time and space. It is for this reason that the enigmatic tradition uses the mirror to represent oppositional pairs: totality and nothingness; flux and fixity.

What does this more nuanced appreciation for the mirror bring to our understanding of Nemean 7? It shows the text developing the unity of opposites, which had been punned already in the name Thearion, “the observer.” Whereas previously vision was perceiving light and darkness, now the speaker adds that his activity is the object of perception, a *sēma*. In fact, this is the first of several *sēmata* in Nemean 7, all of which bear a characteristic unity of opposites

²⁷ Most (1985); Carey (1981); Fraenkel (1950) ad Aesch. Ag. 838-840

²⁸ Carey (1981) 140-1 ad 14-15.

²⁹ AP XIV.108: Οὐδὲν ἔσωθεν ἔχω, καὶ πάντα μοι ἔνδοθεν ἐστὶ,
προῖκα δ’ ἐμῆς ἀρετῆς πᾶσι δίδωμι χάριν.

“I have nothing inside me and everything is inside me, and I grant the use of my virtue to all without charge.” (trans. Paton)

cf. Symphosius *Aen.* 69.1 *speculum*: nulla mihi certa est, nulla est peregrina figura.

which demands interpretation; moreover the majority of these are signaled by wordplay of some sort.

2. Homeric Dialogue

The next *sēma* comes three lines later, and here the speaker chooses to stage a dialogue with Homer and readers of Homer:

20 ἄφνεός πενιχρός τε θανάτου πάρα
σᾶμα νέονται. ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλπομαι
λόγον Ὀδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἄδυεπῆ γενέσθ' Ὅμηρον:
ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσιν οἱ ποτανᾷ τε μαχανᾷ
σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τι· σοφία δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις· τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει
ἦτορ ὄμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος. (19-24)

20 Rich and poor cross beyond
the boundary sign of death. But I expect that
the tale of Odysseus became greater than his suffering through mellifluous Homer,
since something majestic is attached to his lies and contrived trickery –
but (Homer's) *sophia* cheats by misleading with stories, and the greatest mass of men
possess a blind heart.

The speaker offers a gnomic statement which unites “rich” and “poor” in that both “go before/beyond a sign of death” (ἄφνεός πενιχρός τε θανάτου πάρα σᾶμα νέονται 19).³⁰ Context reveals the point not to be just “everyone dies,” but that everyone must confront the *visual sign* (σᾶμα) of death and that life does not necessarily bring proper recognition from those who assign value to the dead. The gnome is applied in the immediately following lines (20-24) to the exaggerated story of Odysseus’ suffering. Death means different things to different people, as the myth of Neoptolemus attests.

³⁰ Carey (1981) 143 prefers the emendation πεῖρας ᾗμα on the basis that θανάτου πάρα σᾶμα “grave of death” is clumsy. But against this view, I note that πάρα σᾶμα is the reading of all the mss. and moreover, that the σᾶμα is not just “grave” but “sign” or “token,” which is relevant here to the stratified understandings which enigmatic speech engenders.

Within the logic of Nemean 7, the elevation of Pindaric *sophia* happens at the expense of another poet's *sophia*, that of Homer. Already from Heraclitus, in the fifth century BCE, there is a line of thinking that responds to and critiques Homer on the very same grounds that the Pindaric speaker critiques the majority of humanity who are misled into a kind of blindness by reading Homer. This critique manifests itself in the enigmatic tradition, which famously kills Homer for not being able to understand the unity of opposites contained in enigmatic speech, possibly even mocking him by translating his physical blindness into a metaphysical one:

ἐξηπάτηναι οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὴν γνῶσιν τῶν φανερῶν παραπλησίως Ὅμηρον, ὃς ἐγένετο τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφώτερος πάντων· ἐκεῖνόν τε γάρ παῖδες φθειράς κατακτείνοντες ἐξηπάτησαν εἰπόντες· ὅσα εἶδομεν καὶ κατελάβομεν, ταῦτα ἀπολείπομεν, ὅσα δὲ οὔτε εἶδομεν οὔτ' ἐλάβομεν, ταῦτα φέρομεν.

Men are deceived in the recognition of what is obvious, like Homer who was wisest of all the Greeks. For he was deceived by boys killing lice, who said: what we see and catch we leave behind; what we neither see nor catch we carry away.
(K XXII = D-K 54 trans. Kahn; Hippolytus *Refutatio* IX.9.5)

Taken together, this early testimonium, along with the Homeric *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, and the existence of riddles requiring a knowledge of Homer (such as the alder riddle) form the basis of the competitive dialogue between texts that deploy enigmatic speech and the text of Homer, which remained popular in rhapsodic performance in the fifth century.³¹ Thus in Nemean 7, I argue that it is not so much that the Pindaric text uses enigmatic speech in order to speak to a certain audience at the detriment of another as it is that Pindaric wordplay authorizes itself over and against a recognized literary authority in a move that is typical of other enigmatic texts. Each of the following examples demonstrate the virtuosity of Pindaric *sophia* by means of implicit and sometimes explicit dialogue with Homeric forms.

³¹ See Introduction pp. 5-9 above on the *Contest*.

3. *Dikē* as the Mean

After delivering the story of Neoptolemus' inauspicious demise at Delphi (he was killed over a disagreement about sacrificial meat), the speaker turns to the positive aspects of the hero's fate. Neoptolemus' death was not a stain on the house of Aeacus. Rather, it was a mark of honor and divine attention, since it was prophesized (ἐχρῆν 44) that he be forever a "custom-overseer" (θεμισκόπων 47) for those giving sacrifice at Delphi. This reframing of the myth of Neoptolemus' death into a *felix culpa* narrative is then followed immediately by an avowal of its sufficiency:

εὐώνυμον ἐς δίκαν τρία ἔπεα διαρκέσει:
οὐ ψεῦδης ὁ μάρτυς ἔργμασιν ἐπιστατεῖ,
Αἴγινα, τεῶν Διός τ' ἐκγόνων. θρασύ μοι τόδ' εἰπεῖν (N. 7.48-50)

"Three words will suffice for well-named δίκη:
A witness – no liar – presides over actions,
those of your offspring with Zeus, Aigina (bold for me to say it)."

The descriptor "well-named" calls our attention to the fact that some language is being marked or named specifically here for a reason.³² Rather than read the "three words" as an enigmatic reference to another part of the poem (as some commentators have done), I want to start by reading them as the playful referent indicated by "well named justice" (εὐώνυμον δίκαν 48).³³ Numbers are a long running strand of the enigmatic tradition; some numbers even have names other than their alphabetic equivalent, and these correspondences are presented as *ainigmata* in the wider tradition. As it happens, we have from Plutarch a relevant passage on the meaning of the name *dikē*, according to the Pythagoreans:

³² On this marking of wordplay, see O'Hara (1996) 76-82.

³³ For the most thorough discussion of this passage and consideration of the meaning, see Teffeteller (2005) with extensive bibliography, although I am not persuaded by her reading that the "three words" comprise the subsequent line *in toto*. The argument is based on the definition of a word ἔπος from Plato, esp. the *Cratylus*.

δίκην δὲ τὴν τριάδα, τοῦ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν καὶ ἀδικεῖσθαι κατ' ἔλλειψιν καὶ ὑπερβολὴν ὄντος, ἰσότητι τὸ δίκαιον ἐν μέσῳ γέγονεν ... Εἴπερ οὖν οἱ δοκιμώτατοι τῶν φιλοσόφων οὐδ' ἐν ἀψύχοις καὶ ἀσωμάτοις πράγμασιν αἰνιγμα τοῦ θεοῦ κατιδόντες ἡξίου ἀμελεῖν οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἀτιμάζειν, ἔτι μᾶλλον οἶμαι τὰς ἐν αἰσθανομέναις καὶ ψυχὴν ἐχούσαις καὶ πάθος καὶ ἦθος φύσεσιν ιδιότητας κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἀγαπητέον εἶναι
Plut. *Mor. De Is. et Os.* 381 F12-14; 382 A10

[The number] three they called "Justice," for, although the doing of injustice and suffering from injustice are caused by deficiency and excess, Justice [Dikē], by reason of its equality, intervenes between the two [There follows a digression on "36"]... If, then, the most noted of the philosophers, observing the riddle of the Divine in inanimate and incorporeal objects, have not thought it proper to treat anything with carelessness or disrespect even more do I think that, in all likelihood, we should welcome those peculiar properties existent in natures which possess the power of perception and have a soul and feeling and character. (Trans. F.C. Babbitt)

A degree of caution is necessary when applying this late testimony to Nemean 7. On the one hand, Pythagorean thought and numerical mysticism were contemporary with and perhaps even popular in Pindar's milieu, especially among his Sicilian clientele.³⁴ But even if that popularity is to be accepted, caution is still in order, since it is generous to assume that Plutarch has not been skewed by his Platonism in tying the numbers to "the Divine" or else, that Pythagoreans have always held the same belief about certain numbers over the centuries. In fact, there are several different Pythagorean numbers associated with δίκη, and it would be misleading not to acknowledge these accounts.³⁵

All the same, I am inclined to take the testimony from Plutarch seriously, not to prove what the Pythagoreans might have thought at one time or another, but to provide a general background for reflecting on the "name of justice" as a unity of opposing forces. This sort of thinking was already happening in Pindar's time. We have testimony from Heraclitus that:

Δίκης ὄνομα οὐκ ἂν ἥδεσαν εἰ ταῦτα μὴ ἦν.

³⁴ Lloyd-Jones (1990) 90-108. On Pythagorean *akousmata* see below pp. 170-171.

³⁵ Aristotle (*Met.* 985b29, 1078b23) describes δικαιοσύνη as the number four, as it is the square of two perfect numbers. See further Burkert (1972) 467 n7.

“If it were not for these things, they would not have known the name of Justice.” (Kahn LXIX = D-K 23)

That Heraclitus is describing the concept of justice as the unity of opposites here may not be obvious at first. But given the context of this fragment as quoted in the ecclesiastical writer Clement and the fact that whenever Heraclitus evokes a name elsewhere he does so by the unity of opposites, it is reasonable to follow Kahn and Marcovich in understanding “these things” (ταῦτα) as a reference to injustices.³⁶ A similar passage from a different source seems to confirm this understanding of Heraclitus’ *Dikē*.³⁷

Finally, in the context of the poem, the idea of justice intervening between the one doing and receiving injustice certainly fits the myth of Neoptolemus’ untimely death at the hands of a Delphic official. As in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, Apollo intervenes in Nemean 7 to set up his own form of justice, in which Neoptolemus is ensconced as a protective divinity. The Pindaric speaker deploys wordplay to affirm his own interpretation of the *sēma* of Neoptolemus’ death, in implicit opposition to previous versions which stressed the defects of the hero’s character and the ignominy of his demise.³⁸

4. Pindar’s Muse: Ivory, gold, and a kenning

The last two passages have illustrated the enigmatic unity of opposites with varying degrees of etymological wordplay. The first passage innovated a well-known metaphor with apparent reference to the name Thearion; the second reflected on the name of justice with

³⁶ Kahn (1979) 145 ; Marcovich 45.

³⁷ εἰδέ<ναι> χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἔδντα ζυνὸν καὶ δίκην ἔριν καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ’ ἔριν καὶ ‡ χρεώμενα ‡
“One must realize that war is shared and Conflict is Justice, and that all things come to pass and *are ordained* in accordance with conflict.” (K. LXXXII = D-K 80) (Origen *Contra Celsum* VI.28)

³⁸ We cannot be certain about how the Homeric tradition portrayed the death of Neoptolemus. There is a scholiast’s testimonium (Page PMG Ibycus 26) that the 6th c. poet Ibycus makes the hero responsible for Polyxena’s death, and the *Little Iliad* (Bernabé fr.21) makes him the murderer of Astyanax. Burgess (2001) 65-66 argues this latter murder to be traditional material preceding even Homer.

reference to Neoptolemus' death. The following passage uses an *ainigma* kenning to illustrate a larger unity of opposites. The intricate composition of this passage, the empowerment of the Muse as the force that reveals unity of opposites authorizes the enigmatic speaker *qua* poet over other kinds of poets.

As many commentators have noted, the imperative *anabaleo* traditionally marks the beginning of an epinician prelude; yet here the verb appears 77 lines into the performance. The striking use of the initializing imperative thus turns the song upon itself as a kind of Moebius strip, twisting (εἶρειν 77) beginning into end. As I now argue, this connection between beginning and end is more than a surface level sign-posting, since this passage, like the prooimion, contains wordplay and asserts the unity of opposites as the unique property of Pindar's Muse:

- 75 ἔα με: νικῶντί γε χάριν, εἴ τι πέραν ἀερθεῖς
 ἀνέκραγον, οὐ τραχύς εἰμι καταθέμεν.
 εἶρειν στεφάνους ἐλαφρόν: ἀναβάλεο: Μοῖσά τοι
 κολλᾷ χρυσὸν ἔν τε λευκὸν ἐλέφανθ' ἀμᾶ
 καὶ λείριον ἄνθεμον ποντίας ὑφελοῖς' ἐέρσας.
 80 Διὸς δὲ μεμναμένος ἀμφὶ Νεμέα
 πολύφατον θρόον ὕμνων δόνει
 ἡσυχᾶ. (N.7.75-82)

- 75 Indulge me! Even if I, having been lifted up, were somehow
 shouting too much, I am not delinquent in depositing *charis* for a victor.
 Easy work, to weave garlands— stir it up! How the Muse
 does fuse bright ivory and gold,
 having plucked as well a tender bloom of marine dew!
 80 And remembering Zeus at Nemea,
 let whirl through song the far-famed roar,
 yet in repose.

As if to gloss this unity of opposites evoked by the initializing imperative, the narrator offers the striking image of the “triple crown” composed of three elements – gold, ivory (78) and some kind of plant matter (79). The verb “fuse” (κολλᾷ 78) indicates an elemental synthesis, a fusion much stronger than the physical idea of “to inlay precious materials” which some translators

have used. For example, Aeschylus uses the verb to describe how ruin (ἄτη) is permanently fused with the house of Atreus.³⁹ The verb also appears in a well-attested riddle describing how cupping glasses burnt onto flesh cling to wounds “so tightly that they become one blood.”⁴⁰

The problem is not, then, whether there is a synthesis of dissimilar things but rather which dissimilar things are being synthesized, and to what effect. The answers depend on what we take the referent of line 79 (καὶ λείριον ἄνθεμον ποντίας ὑφελοῖς ἔρσας) to be. This line presents the sort of *ainigma* kenning which could have been told at symposia. Just to be clear, the kenning qualities of this line have to do with over-description/ pleonasm (“soft bloom” – “marine dew”) and how the phrase synthesizes traditionally separate categories of “land vegetation” and “ocean.” A similarly impossible synthesis takes place in Pythian 4, within the enigmatic context of Medea’s prophecy about the magical “clod” of Cyrene, which inhabits both land and sea.⁴¹

What kind of image does coral joined with ivory and gold produce? Certainly, a prestige object of some value – but critics have always asked what valences do these *agalmata* connote, specifically regards to the poetry produced by the speaker.⁴² For example, ivory is sometimes associated with fabrication and falsehood (in Pindar and in Homer), and enigmatic speech, along with all metaphor, is a kind of elaborate lying. But it is not obvious how “falsehood” would be evoked likewise by gold or coral; when gold is imbued with any quality in Pindar, it is “excellence.”⁴³ Moreover, the syntax of the clause suggests a contrast between the mysterious

³⁹ Ag. 1566.

⁴⁰ Ath. X 452b-c ἄνδρ’ εἶδον πυρὶ χαλκὸν ἐπ; ἀνέρι **κολλήσαντα** οὕτω συγκόλλως ὥστε σύναιμα ποεῖν. Cf. also AP XIV.54; Plut. *Sept. Sap.* 154b-c., where Cleoboulina’s composing riddles is referred to as “weaving” διαπλέκουσαν.

⁴¹ P. 4.38-40 and see further the discussion of Segal (1986) 81-84.

⁴² For other Pindaric poetry as *agalmata* moments, see N 8.15 (Lydian headband) and O. 11.13 (golden-olive crown) and the discussion of Kurke (1991) 103-107, 190; Ford (2002) 94-123; on this passage, Griffith (1988) with further references.

⁴³ For the connection between ivory and falsehood as negative in Homer, see *Od.* XIX.563-565, where Penelope describes the gates of ivory and horn in the underworld. Here “ivory” is etymologized with the verb ἐλεφαίρομαι

referent and the prestige items gold and ivory, rather than a triangulation involving all three elements. The elements gold and ivory are in close proximity to the main verb, and the line is divided by the adverb “together” (ἀμᾶ 78), whereas only the third object receives the participle of the Muse in “plucking” (ὕφελοῖσα 79) and is set apart with its own connective (καί).⁴⁴ For this reason, although “coral” has remained the chosen referent of translators and commentators, other possibilities are worth exploring because they are qualitatively different than – and possibly, opposite to – luxury items like gold, ivory, coral, or purple wool.⁴⁵

Rory Egan has argued that the “marine dew” (ποντία ἑέρση) in line 79 was actually the name of a flower in Archaic Greece, indeed a very common species which was translated into Latin as the calque *ros maris* (“dew of the sea”) and eventually assimilated to *rosmarinum*, which then became our “rosemary.”⁴⁶ The Greeks did have a name for “rosemary” (naturally, since it grows almost like a weed in Mediterranean climates), but it was a Semitic loanword, (λιβανωτίς) and does not appear in the literary record before the third century BCE in the botanic catalogue of Theophrastus.⁴⁷ Thus, Egan conjectures that the lack of a specific word for an exceedingly common species before the third century BCE leaves a window open for ποντία ἑέρση to have signified rosemary, even though it occurs only here in extant Greek literature. As evidence for the reading of this phrase as “rosemary,” Egan relies on later sources including

(“to deceive). See further O’Hara (1996) 11, 182; Likewise in Pindar, Ol 1. the ivory of Pelops’ shoulder is connected with the fabrications of those who believe the myth of his consumption by the gods. See Maslov (2015) 104-105.

⁴⁴ This proceeds from the assumption that one does not ὑφαίρεω gold or ivory.

⁴⁵ Σ N. 7 *ad loc.* proposes two possible interpretations. First, that the referent should be taken as “coral” (κουράλιον) because “of [coral] seeming, as long as it is underwater, to be tender and similar to a plant. But when it is removed and is separated from water, it is said to harden with the sun shining down on it.” Alternatively, that, “others say that “ocean dew” is the color purple on account of the shade of the conch shell and that the “lily boom” is wool. And these things refer to that *poikilia* of things woven, since he has likened the poem to a woven garment, as he does also in other passages [e.g.] “But I weave a variegated garment for the Amythanidae.” (fr. 179)”

⁴⁶ Egan (2005) 56-57 notes that the phenomenon of Greek→Latin botanical calques is quite common; Griffith (1988) 266 n41 notes the possibility of the kenning meaning “rosemary” in passing.

⁴⁷ Egan (2005) 56 cites Chantraine (1974) for the Semitic origin of λιβανωτίς.

Galen and Dioscorides, who explicitly name the aromatic herb (λιβανωτής) as rosemary (ῥωσμαρῖνον), in combination with the fact that, for the Romans at least, *rosmarinum* seems to have been a commonly garlanded herb.⁴⁸ Beyond these flaws in Egan’s reasoning, the more serious problem to my mind is that he does not consider what effect “rosemary” would have on our perception of the image of the crown (besides noting the existence of actual medieval crowns fashioned from rosemary and gold, which would speak to its realism, which I think misses the point entirely here).

First, a disclaimer, since no one (including Egan) has, to my mind, satisfactorily identified the referent plant or animal material in this passage. The fact that reading “rosemary” creates a more easily defined unity of opposites between “prestige objects” and “common objects,” whereas coral or dyed wool does not (or at least not immediately or to the same extent), steers my own reading of the passage in that direction, with the caveat that I am now exploring the explanatory potential of the word rather than arguing for an exclusive interpretation of the kenning.

Framing the utterance as enigmatic, we can note several ancillary wordplays, which pronounce the unity of opposites so that it is not merely a concept but an auditory experience. Such features complement Deborah Steiner’s claim that Pindaric agalmata are *oggetti parlanti*.⁴⁹ Likewise, we can observe that sound repetition in Indo-European poetry has an indexical function, “pointing out” the unique skill of the poet, as Calvert Watkins has described in detail.⁵⁰ First, the paronomasia of *elaphron ana* (77) and *elephant amai* (78) enacts for the listener the power of Pindar’s weaving Muse: “ivory” is “easy.” This distinguishes Pindaric wordplay from

⁴⁸ Egan (2005) 56 cites Hor. *C* 3.23.15-16

⁴⁹ Steiner (1993) whose argument is based on similarities to inscribed epigram and victory statue dedications. Metaphorical objects and language are discussed at 173-176. (Nemean 7 is not mentioned.)

⁵⁰ Watkins (1995) 97-108.

that of Homer who uses wordplay to call ivory “deceitful” (see above, n. 43). Carey prefers to read a strong contrast between the mundane activity of the poet in 77 “to weave garlands” and the divine/alchemical activity of the Muse in “welding” these prestige materials together.⁵¹ This is too subtle, since the point is that Pindar’s Muse and no one else’s is being invoked here as a *sphragis* to mark his poetic virtuosity, which the text then performs. It is the wordplay that renders the muse’s difficult “alchemical” miracle to be the easy work of the poet. The repetition of (and variation on) consonant and vowel sounds across five syllables enacts the weaving. Thus Carey’s strong contrast need not apply, and we can read the first clause followed by the imperative (ἐῖπειν...ἀναβάλεο 77) as a general claim followed by the specific example of the Muse’s crown in 78-79.

A second paronomasia appears after the image of the crown between *memnamenos* (80) and *Nemeai* (80).⁵² This too creates the effect of verbal sound weaving, the work of Pindar’s Muse, but no longer in the context of the crown; instead, it makes reference to a specific physical location. In Hellenistic poetry, the paronomasia of a place name would perhaps be seen as a kind of aetiologizing. But by the conventions of epinician rhetoric, this device refocuses the exotic and transcendent qualities of the imagery and the poetry back into the specific instance of Sogenes’ victory, which was celebrated at Nemea. More specifically, the device of weaving refocuses our attention from the chryselephantine majesty of the Muse’s crown toward the modest crown of celery offered in those games. The effect is somewhat chiasmic, since the humble rosemary infused the divine craftsmanship with earthy simplicity; whereas

⁵¹ Carey (1981) 171-2 ad 78.

⁵² Barkhuizen (1975) 39-40 would prefer to understand etymological wordplay between μεμναμένος (80) and Μοῖσα (77). While the connection does seem to be made elsewhere in Pindar, here I think any such link would have been occluded by the verbal and cognitive display of the intervening lines.

“remembering of Zeus at Nemea” infuses the earthbound unadorned (naked) athletes with the divine.

This second half of the “epinician restart” (the imperative δόνει 81 being parallel to the initializing verb ἀναβάλεο 77) is important not only for the unity of opposites of the crown, which was always going to be abstract, but also for the more visceral representation of the performance itself as a unity of opposites. The contradiction of a song that is “much spoken” (πολύφατον 81) but also “in quiet” (ἡσυχᾷ 82) speaks to three slightly different oppositional pairs, depending on how one interprets the words: a.) speech and silence b.) movement and stillness c.) fame abroad and quiescence at home.

5. The Life of Neoptolemus; the Death of Homer

In sum, I have now discussed three examples of the association between wordplay and the figure of “the unity of opposites” in Nemean 7. The description of life as seeing light and darkness pointed to the victor’s father’s name, Thearion. The concept of Justice as “three words” pointed to the truth of opposing forces in the Neoptolemus myth. Finally, the suppressed referent element the Muse’s crown offered a chance for the audience to create their own meaning and to forge with the poet the unity of opposites embodied by the crown.

Proceeding from the assumption that the poet is apologizing for Paean 6, the traditional interpretation takes this following passage as the “final apology” in a string of such conscious rebranding passages involving Neoptolemus.⁵³ Instead, I offer the following reading, which treats these lines as an example of etymological wordplay, which initiates a dialogue with Homeric poetry. Rather than describe the unity of opposites, as evidenced in previous wordplays,

⁵³ See above, pp. 58-62.

these lines contain a disavowal of the kind of poetry which (and the kind of interpreter who) does not recognize such unity. In making this argument I refer to two passages, the final lines of Nemean 7 and Pindar's critique of Homer earlier in the poem, which, taken together, demonstrate how authorial self-fashioning and poetic criticism are rooted in the enigmatic tradition:

τὸ δ' ἐμὸν οὐ ποτε φάσει κέαρ
 ἀτρόποισι Νεοπτόλεμον ἐλκύσαι
 ἔπεσι: ταὐτὰ δὲ τρίς τετράκι τ' ἀμπολεῖν
 ἀπορία τελέθει, τέκνοισιν ἄτε μαψυλάκας, 'Διὸς Κόρινθος.'

My heart will profess never
 to have cut "Neoptolemus" a freshly plowed furrow with un-skilled
 words: to plow over the same things three and four times yields
 fruitlessness, just as that of a chatterer to children: "Corinth, of Zeus."⁵⁴ (N.7.102-105)

The name of Neoptolemus offers an easy target for etymologizing wordplay because it appears to contain a simple Greek compound (*neos* + *ptolemos* = "new war"). It often competes in later tradition with "Pyrrhus," a name which is the target of two etymological riddles in the *Greek Anthology*.⁵⁵ (It is not clear how long Neoptolemus possessed both his names, but it could be a

⁵⁴ Notes to translation: Slater (2001) has maintained that the negation οὐ ποτε (102) must be taken with the infinitive rather than the verb of speaking even if its position associates it with the indirect speech. The difference may seem minor, but taking the adverb with the infinitive favors the "apology" reading because of its defensiveness: ("I will never admit to dragging..." vs. "I will proclaim that I never...") This latter reading is preferable, in addition to satisfying the conventions of Greek syntax, has the advantage of removing any doubt about the "apology" reading, which would read incorrectly "my heart will never admit to..."

⁵⁵ 1.) AP XIV.20:

Εἰ πυρὸς αἰθομένου μέσσην ἑκατοντάδα θείης,
 παρθένου εὐρήσεις υἷα καὶ φονέα.

If you put one hundred [πρ'] in the middle of a burning fire [πυρός], you will find the son and slayer of a virgin. (Trans. Paton)

2.) AP XIV.21:

Ἐς μέσον Ἡφαίστοιο βαλὼν ἑκατοντάδα μούνην,
 παρθένου εὐρήσεις υἷα καὶ φονέα.

By casting into the midst of Hephaestus only one hundred, you will find the son and slayer of a virgin. (my own trans., as Loeb says this is the same riddle as #20.) The answer may be the same, but the phrasing of the first clause is more abstract and archaizing with the Ἡφαίστοιο genitive.

reflection of disassociating his name from the brutal acts he committed in the Trojan War, on which, see n. 38 above.) I submit that the Pindaric narrator offers a novel etymology in this passage by deriving the hero's name from *neios tripolos*, "thrice plowed field," a rather rare poetic phrase which appears only in Homer and Hesiod.⁵⁶ The wordplay occurs in two stages; first the narrator signals the play by giving the verb "to drag" (ἐλκύσαι 103) the direct object Neoptolemos. The strange use of this verb, which I describe below, teases the image of the hero as a field. Next the narrator glosses the pun with a capping gnome that makes reference to and disavows the Homeric phrase *neios tripolos* (νεῖος τρίπολος). Plowing a field three times, contra the expression of Homer and Hesiod, is a bad idea. The *tri*- prefix appears when the name is glossed by the line immediately following (ταῦτ' ἄν τρις τετράκι τ' ἄμπολεῖν 104). Thus not only is the speaker making a pun, he is appropriating and capping a Homeric expression, a move which reiterates the disavowal of Homer earlier in the poem (20-21) and as I discussed above, assumes the mantle of enigmatic discourse elsewhere in Greek literature, which professes delight in playfully overcoming Homer. At the outset of this discussion, I want to be clear that the wordplay itself is only one prong of the argument that this passage is presenting an enigmatic narrator, since this presentation also involves the structure of metaphor, as I discuss below.

The traditional interpretation of this passage as a kind of apology requires the adjective *atropos* to mean something like "ill-mannered" and the verb *helkō* to mean "insult" or "besmirch." Both of these readings fail to take into account the kinds of imagery and qualities associated with the words elsewhere in archaic literature, and thus the wordplay is obscured.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Od.* 5.127; *Il.* 18.541; Hes. *Th.* 971. (A parallel may be in the name of "Triptolemus" as "thrice-plowed," but I have yet to uncover any ancient etymologizing to that effect.)

⁵⁷ Carey (1981) 177 ad 102-104: contains the standard view, with further references and notes that "since the ode proper has finished, it is not unreasonable for Pindar to speak of his own affairs, since this does not break continuity."

The verb *helkō* assumes a wide range of meanings from the negative “rending” of dogs done to corpses or to the “wounding” action of a spear to the benign agricultural use of “pulling” a plow.⁵⁸ The multiple meanings leave a wide swath of conceptual space for wordplay. As far as I can tell, however, there is no attestation of a metaphorical wounding or “besmirching,” similar to the American internet slang “to drag” (tr.), which means to insult someone verbally.⁵⁹ Now it certainly could be the case that Pindar coins a new expression here, but any neologism would innovate upon the semantic field of “physical motion, dragging.” Thus the sense of the verb with the pun is either to plow an already plowed field or more literally, to do violence to it.

For the adjective *atropos*, “un-turned,” however, the options are more limited. Commentators are correct to note the word as a negative ethical designation arising from the idiom of the symposium. Thus Carey, following Fennell, cites as precedent to this Pindaric usage the noun form *atropia* from Theognis.⁶⁰ A closer look at that passage suggests that the semantic range of the *atrop-* lexeme encompasses self-referential wordplay or “turning” of the surrounding lines, printed in full below, which use the image of an octopus to fashion the narrator as enigmatic:

θυμέ, φίλους κατὰ πάντας ἐπίστρεφε ποικίλον ἦθος,
 ὀργὴν συμμίσγων ἦντιν' ἕκαστος ἔχει.
πολύπου ὀργὴν ἴσχε πολυπλόκου, ὃς ποτὶ πέτρη,
 τῇ προσομιλήσῃ, τοῖος ἰδεῖν ἐφάνη.
 νῦν μὲν τῇδ' ἐφέπου, τότε δ' ἄλλοῖος χροά γίνου.
 κρέσσων τοι σοφίη γίνεται ἀτροπίης. (Thgn. 213-218)

My heart, keep turning a versatile disposition in accordance with all your friends,
 mingling with it the mood which each one has. Adopt the mood of the cunning octopus

⁵⁸ Agricultural uses of ἔλκω include the hauling of mules Il 17.743; 24.324 and plowing a field Od 13.32 (though the object there is the implement rather than the field, which is in the genitive.)

⁵⁹ LSJ ἔλκω 3b records this passage's use of the word as a special case: “to carp at.” Slater *ad* ἔλκω 3 is similarly desperate, claiming an identical use in this passage as in N 4.94 ἀπάλαιστος ἐν λόγῳ ἔλκειν (“he fights unmoved in speech”) referring to the victor's trainer. But there is no “wrestling” context here, and the verb is transitive.

⁶⁰ Carey (1981) 179.

which seems to resemble the rock to which it clings. Now follow along in this direction, now take on a different complexion. Cleverness is in truth superior to inflexibility. (trans. Gerber)

The poetic speaker in this passage describes the quality of *atropia* only in opposition to a *sophia* (218) like that of the octopus, which is described as “many-folded” (πολυπλόκου 215). This opposition introduces an element of wiliness and even deceptiveness into the kind of wisdom or skill being praised here, calling to mind the wiles of *polutropos* Odysseus and the deceptions of Homer’s *sophia* addressed earlier in Nemean 7. Looking to the rest of Theognidean corpus, Nagy understands Theognis’ *sophia* as a characteristic of “a mantis ‘seer’ [Thgn. 682] – a man who speaks in the mode of an ainigma.”⁶¹

In fact, I think we can be more specific about the enigmatic intertexts between this passage of Theognis and the end of Nemean 7. First, the Thegonidean narrator (for the first time in the literary record) chooses to use the “incorrect” second declension form of “octopus,” in order to produce paronomasia and perhaps even an etymology with “many-folded” (πολυπλόκου 215).⁶² Second, as Nagy notes, the tenor of the metaphor (the subtle character recommended to the addressee) is conflated with the vehicle (the camouflage of the octopus) in the verb προσομιλήση (216), which is used normally to describe human social interaction about which the speaker is giving advice (rather than the interaction between a non-human and an inanimate object).⁶³ Conversely, we could also note that the vehicle is conflated with the tenor in line 217, after the speaker appears to shift the frame from the third person octopus back to the imperatives

⁶¹ Nagy (1990) 426. Nagy ties Nemean 7’s criticism of Homer to this passage of Theognis, but does not remark upon the use of the adjective ἄτροπος at the end of the poem.

⁶² Incorrect, as it reconstitutes a third declension noun as a second declension one. Etymologizing, because being πολυπλόκος is an essential quality of the octopus, necessary for its survival, and the single adjective gloss is quite common as an etymologizing device in later poetry. Moreover the paronomasia, which is the (sometimes beguiling) similarity of sounds, here performs the beguiling similarity of the octopus to its natural environment.

⁶³ Nagy (1990) 425 n51, citing Thgn. 31-32 as an example. However, in later works such as Oppian’s *Halieutica* (232-320) the octopus, like all the other creatures of the sea, is described in human social terms as part of a riveting dramatic narrative.

concerning “human social interaction,” but then relapses into the vehicle image with the penultimate word, “skin” (χρόα): “Sometimes fasten upon in this way, and sometimes be different with respect to your skin/color.”⁶⁴ A larger point is that, in discussing two different kinds of necessary cleverness (human-social and octopus-camouflage), the Theognidean narrator demonstrates his own poetic cleverness and skill at composing wordplay.

I now argue that a similar verbal structure characterizes the narrator in Nemean 7. First, the disorienting narrative effect of “metaphor bleed” is present in an even more compressed form here. The initial wordplay, which adopts the metaphor of agricultural imagery “Never did I furrow a freshly-plowed field/ Neoptolemus with unskilled words” mixes the tenor (“words,” the poet’s discourse or perhaps ἔπεα, epic poetry) with the vehicle (“plowing a field”). That is to say, the dative of agent “words” replaces whatever farm implement we would normally expect to bring about the activity of plowing. (I have also noticed possible re-segmentation wordplay in κέαρ ἀνθρώποισι, where sounds resembling a possible vehicle agent “plow” (ἄροτρον) may be lurking, but this would probably be too disruptive to the syntax.)

The next sentence, which glosses this idea of a plowing a freshly plowed field repeatedly as something that produces “fruitlessness” (ἀπορία 105), again mixes tenor and vehicle in the dual meaning of the word – lack of resources and lack (or irrelevance) of poetic material.⁶⁵ This *aporia* is then itself glossed by the simile image of chattering to children with the specific (still undeciphered) phrase/figure “Corinth son/city of Zeus.” Finally, I have also underlined the highly unusual alliterative string of seven (or six consecutive) dentals, since this could be the sort

⁶⁴ That is to say, it is not possible for human beings to change their χρώς, thus human behavior (tenor) is conflated with octopus physiognomy (vehicle). I can find no example of the term meaning “facial expression”; another possibility, however, might be the self-mutilation appropriate to mourning practices, but that would probably not fit the context of this passage.

⁶⁵ See above, pp. 6-9 where I discuss the term ἄροτρον and path metaphors in general as markers of enigmatic discourse.

of stuttering, childish sound that prompts the final reference of how a “chatterer speaks to children” (as opposed to a pun on *μαυσιλάκας/ βακχυλίδης* which was proposed by Bury⁶⁶). In sum, I understand the larger sequence of the final lines of Nemean 7 as:

Text	Wordplay/Metaphor	Vehicle Gloss	Tenor Gloss
Nemean 7.102-105	Neoptolemus = <i>neios tripolos</i>	“To plow over these things three or four times...”	“with unskilled words.” T alliteration: (<i>ταῦτ' ἄ δὲ τρις τετράκι τ' ἄμπολεῖν</i>)
Theognis 213-218	<i>poluplokou polupou</i> much-folded octopus	“which looks like the rock to with which it associates	“Be changeable with respect to your <u>skin</u> .”

Fig. 1 Metaphor Structure at N. 7.102-105 and Thgn. 213-218

As in the Theognis passage, these kinds of wordplay elevate the narrator as a special kind of poetic speaker, one who speaks with *sophia* rather than *atropia* (and certainly not *aporia*). The etymologizing in combination with the mixed metaphors shows a narrator who is making a statement about his own presentation and virtuosity but doing so in the service of the victor, since the wordplay target is the name of Neoptolemus, the polis’ heroic ancestor. But whereas the Theognidean narrator’s etymologizing spoke to the “shiftiness” or *poikilia* of his character; the Pindaric narrator uses etymologizing to affirm the truth in opposition to falsehood. The narrator affirms that the name and myth Neoptolemus is “fertile ground” for his epinician praise poetry (where perhaps many would assert that it is not).

⁶⁶ Bury (1888) 202.

But what does an assertion of “fertile ground” mean in the context of the ode and its performance? I understand two underlying possibilities. First, the myth represents a prime example of the *felix culpa* (which has already been expressed as the unity of opposites described in the “name of justice” above), just as the kin murder of Phocis in Nemean 5 is a *felix culpa* for the Aeacids. Even though Neoptolemus, like many of the Aeacids, feuded with Apollo, committing outrages at one of the god’s altars in Troy, and even though he suffers a violent end during a sacrifice, he somehow becomes enshrined in a position of honor for the temple community as a guardian of the god’s rites. This kind of reversal, the opposition of countervailing narratives, offers fertile poetic *res* for the epinician speaker, who is accustomed elsewhere to use growth and agricultural metaphors to describe his own activity.⁶⁷

There may also be a more literal reference to “freshly plowed furrow,” which would make this deployment of wordplay in dialogue with communal interests on Aegina and at Delphi. Barbara Kowalzig has recently argued that the idea of fertility and the role of agriculture conveyed by the term *eueteria* (“good crop”) was critical to Delphi throughout antiquity.⁶⁸ The sanctuary was known for its poor soil and reliance on outside contributions, a fact which formed the rebuke of Aesop preserved in the Vita Tradition.⁶⁹ Moreover, it was Aegina (whence hailed the victor) whose Thessalian land holdings and extensive role in the grain trade provided the Delphic community with a large part of their food supply during the first half of the fifth century BCE. As Kowalzig puts it, “[B]eing key in the food supply makes you a good Greek.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ E.g., O. 6.105; O. 9.48.

⁶⁸ Kowalzig (2007) 203-219, with specific evidence of the Aeginetan grain trade at 212 n81 with further references.

⁶⁹ See Kurke (2011) 71f, who cites as evidence a scholion *ad* Ar. V. 1446: ὃν φασιν ἐλθόντα ποτὲ εἰς τοὺς Δελφοὺς ἀποσκῶναι αὐτοὺς ὅτι μὴ ἔχοιεν γῆν ἀφ’ ἧς ἐργαζόμενοι διατρέφοιντο, ἀλλὰ περιμένειεν ἀπὸ τῶν θεοῦ θυμάτων διαζῆν. “They say that Aesop, when he came once to Delphi, jeered at the Delphians because they did not have land from which they could support themselves by agricultural labor, but instead they waited around to make their living from the sacrifices of the god.” (trans. Kurke). Cf. also *HApollo* 525-529.

⁷⁰ Kowalzig (2007) 217.

Aeginetan contributions to festivals such as the Delphic Theoxenia and their own cult of Zeus Hellanios solidified their Panhellenic bonafides, a constant interest in the face of unrelenting competition with their aggressive northern neighbor in Athens and of course, the fact of their medism during the war. The Delphic community memorialized these contributions with the honored site of Neoptolemus' burial and a large painting by Polygnotos of the hero in the Leskhe of the Knidians.⁷¹ Thus the speaker's association of the name of Neoptolemus with agriculture perhaps nods toward the honored role of Aeginetans such as Thearion and his clan at Delphi, a point of great civic pride.

Overall, this section has argued that wordplay, an umbrella term including assonance, paronomasia, homophony, and etymologizing, is a critical element of the Pindaric text's deployment of enigmatic speech in Nemean 7. Moreover, the discussion has drawn upon other examples of enigmatic texts and speakers in order to make the point adduced in the Introduction, namely, that these features of Pindar's text are rooted in a tradition which defines and authorizes itself against poetic predecessors, the most prominent of whom remained Homer all the way from Heraclitus down through Philetas and the later tradition of the *Greek Anthology*.

B. Nemean 6: *Ainigma* Praising Literary Tradition

Whereas a large part of our understanding of Nemean 7 hangs on our understanding of complex historical circumstances, the prior poem in the Alexandrine edition of Pindar offers a relatively straightforward example of "praise-forward" epinician poetry. Commentators have always been drawn to the ode's celebration of poetic activity. The following reading discusses that celebration in relationship with enigmatic in the prooimion to Nemean 6. In contrast with

⁷¹ Kowalzig (2007) 222 and Currie (2005) 305.

Nemean 7, this ode uses enigmatic speech to extend a field of continuity between the text and its poetic predecessors. The articulation of this field begins in the prooimion, where the Pindaric speaker treats three kinds of signification in sequence: he delivers an *ainigma* (1-4), he opines on divine interpretation (4-6), and he then interprets a *symbolon* offered to him by the victor (7-11). As with Nemean 7, each of these elements represents an embedded dialogue with literary tradition and discourses about interpretation.

The ode was written for Alcimidas a young victor in wrestling, who belonged to the Bassidae clan and hailed from Aegina, the island polis whose child victors are widely represented in the epinicia.⁷² Perhaps because of the prominence of naming, the Pindaric prooimion always offers a conductive space for staging a dialogue and sometimes this takes the form of enigmatic speech, for example using wordplay to hint at archaic thought patterns characteristic of enigmatic speakers (as we saw in Nemean 7). The first two lines of the prooimion offer up what is usually interpreted as a gnome, but which I think ought to be treated as a species of *ainigma* because the text withholds its referent, uses numbers in a suggestive way, and names cognition and written communication. Most of all, the speaker constructs the victor as an active participant in significatory dialogue, an entity who, even as a child, provides *symbola* that he the speaker must interpret for the broader community. In this sense, the dialogue is three-cornered, and what the narrator validates in the prooimion is a child-centric riddling model discussed in the Introduction:

5 ἔν ἀνδρῶν, ἐν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν
ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· διείργει δὲ πᾶσα κεκριμένα
δύναμις, ὥς τὸ μὲν οὐδέν, ὁ δὲ χάλκεος ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν ἔδος
μένει οὐρανός· ἀλλὰ τι προσφέρομεν ἔμπαν ἢ μέγαν
νόον ἥτοι φύσιν ἀθανάτοις,
καίπερ ἐφαμερίαν οὐκ εἰδότες οὐδὲ μετὰ νύκτας ἄμμε πότμος

⁷² O. 8; N. 6; N. 7; I. 6; I. 8;

οἷαν τιν' ἔγραψε δραμεῖν ποτὶ στάθμαν.
 τεκμαίρει καὶ νυν Ἀλκιμίδας τὸ συγγενὲς ἰδεῖν
 ἄγχι καρποφόροις ἀρούραισιν, αἷτ' ἀμειβόμεναι
 10 τόκα μὲν ὧν βίον ἀνδράσιν ἐπηετανὸν πεδίων ἔδοσαν,
 τόκα δ' αὖτ' ἀναπαυσάμεναι σθένοσ' ἔμαρψαν. (N. 6.1-11)

One race of men, one of gods;⁷³ yet from one mother we both
 breathe; an ability wholly sundered⁷⁴ separates us both:
 since the one is nothing, the other, heaven holds eternally, an inviolate
 seat of bronze. But we do resemble immortals in some way, whether as to our great
 5 mind or bodily form,
 even while not cognizant of our transitory nature,
 nor towards what sort of goalpost fate has written for us to run by night.
 Even now Alcimidas gives a token of the relationship/ his nobility for witness,
 just like the fruit-bearing fields,
 10 sometimes in turn give abundant life from the plains to men,
 but at other times by rest they gain their strength through repose.

Besides the formal features just discussed, there are several other features that identify lines 1-7
 as an *ainigma*. One is the strangeness of the thought: To stress the shared lineage of humans and
 gods is not a common topos of archaic poetry, even if it is possible to draw a line of descent from
 divinity to humanity from Gaia through Deucalion and Pyrrha, as most commentators insist the
 Pindaric narrator does implicitly here.⁷⁵ Such an interpretation is necessary but not sufficient. It
 does not account for why the narrator chooses a single “mother” for both races rather than a
 father⁷⁶; it does not account for the metaphorical use of mother (= Gaia) to mean “distant
 ancestor” rather than direct ancestor⁷⁷; nor it does not account for the present tense verbs

⁷³ The traditional debate surrounding this passage has been whether to take ἐν... ἐν...δὲ to mean “two separate races, yet” or “the races of gods and men are one, and....” I have chosen the former, following the survey and discussion by Kloch-Kornitz (1961), though as I discuss, I understand the point to be that the two races are both similar and different.

⁷⁴ Sandys’ phrasing here; the other option would be “every power/ability,” but I understand reference to a singular power here, following Slater ad πᾶς: “their completely disparate power.”

⁷⁵ E.g., Duchemin (1955) 186f cites Hes. *Theog.* 117, which describes Gaia as the “seat” of all things

⁷⁶ Descent from the divine Earth does appear in Greek religious context as a specific local claim (e.g., Athens, Thebes see further Zeitlin (1986)), and not a universal one. Aegina did not make such a claim, as far as we know.

⁷⁷ Indeed, Pindar is happy elsewhere to coin a word (ματρομάτωρ O. 6.84) for precisely such a “distant maternal ancestor” figure. Moreover, metaphorical uses for “mother” do appear with some frequency in other prooimia, e.g. N. 3.1 ὦ πότνια Μοῖσα, μᾶτερ ἀμετέρα “Muse, my mother...”; I.1.1 μᾶτερ ἐμὰ (“my mother” = Thebes); O. 8.1 μᾶτερ ὧ χρυσοστεφάνων ἀέθλων Οὐλυμπία (“mother of golden-crowned games, Olympia”) N.5.6 οὐπω γένυσι φαίνων τερεῖναν ματέρ’ οἰνάνθαν ὀπώραν (“not yet showing the tender mother, the wine bloom of summer”)

describing the relationship of descent between the mother and her human offspring (πνέομεν 1). Moreover, this formulation of humanity directly contradicts the Pindaric narrator in the Paean fragments, who considers being “of mortal mother” as the precise attribute which *separates* humans from gods.⁷⁸

Undoubtedly, there is a certain circularity in proposing that a passage contains an *ainigma* and then supplying what I take to be a suitable answer. On the other hand, I note that these lines contain the very sorts of devices we have come to expect from enigmatic discourse; especially the joint appearance of numbers and the signifying force behind “birth,” both of which were present in Nemean 7 and which are prominent among Greek enigmatic texts.⁷⁹ And perhaps even the same sort of syntax: “One mother unites, and one power divides” conveys a powerful sort of contradiction, a unity of opposites that spurs the audience to consider how the referent behind both nouns (“mother,” “power”) can possibly refer to the same solution.

I would propose language, *glōssa*, to be one such referent.⁸⁰ The key, I believe, is in the verbs “breathe and write” which describe each class’s existence (πνέομεν 1; ἔγραψε 7). In these verbs life and fate, propagation, descent, and (for humans) death are all analogized as a medium

⁷⁸ τί ἔλπει σοφίαν ἔμμεν, ἄν ὀλίγον τοι
 ἀνὴρ ὑπὲρ ἀνδρὸς ἴσχει;
 οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ’ ὅπως τὰ θεῶν
 βουλευμάτων ἐρευνάσει βροτέα φρενί·
 θνατᾶς δ’ ἀπὸ μητρὸς ἔφυν. (fr. 61)

“What do you suppose wisdom is, that thing whereby one man attains some slight edge over another? It is not possible that with a mortal heart he will discover the plans of the gods. He is of mortal mother.” (Trans. Rutherford) Though, of course, I do not mean to suggest that the Pindaric narrator must be consistent across odes (and especially, across genres, as here), this adds weight to the argument that the Nemean 6 prooimion is not asserting traditional wisdom in a straightforward way.

⁷⁹ See the prooimion of N. 7 above pp. 6-9 and the description of Iamos’ birth in O. 6, discussed below pp. 46-48.

⁸⁰ γλῶσσα has the particular meaning of “capacity for articulate language” at P. 5.111; N. 4.86 (that of the poet’s in performance); I. 5.47 (poet’s); I. 6.72 referring to Lampon the “Naxian whetstone”. As far as I can tell, no one else has proposed language as the meaning of this figure, although Turyn cites (ad 1-2) in parallel to this passage a fragment of Iamblichus (Stob. 2.7.13, p. 121, 19 Wachsmuth), which states a specific kind of language (dialectic) as the property of humans and gods. For language as “metaphorical mother” see e.g., Soph. Aj. 174: φάτις ὧ μῦτερ αἰσχύνας ἐμᾶς (“speech, mother of my shame...”).

of language, whether spoken or written. Moreover, the term *dunamis* carries with it linguistic connotations in certain senses and can refer either to the capacity for language or the meaning of certain words.⁸¹ Indeed, in later enigmatic texts such as Plutarch's account of the riddle contest between Amasis and Bias and in the Aesop Romance, *glōssa* is the answer to the riddle: "What is best and worst among human beings?" As John Konstantakos points out, the fact the gnome is attributed separately to different sages probably indicates its association with the older wisdom tradition, upon which Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius drew.⁸²

Furthermore, to understand a reference to language as the commonality between gods and humans accords well with the main theme of Nemean 6, which entails the power of human language to memorialize and propagate the name of a victor, his clan, and his male ancestors, even those long departed. As explained later in the ode, the Bassidae have won more boxing victories than any other clan in Greece, and it is by propagating this fame that the speaker achieves his own fame. He then delivers the following hypomnesis to the Muse⁸³:

ἔλπομαι
μέγα εἰπὼν σκοποῦ ἅντα τυχεῖν
ὥτ' ἀπὸ τόξου ἰεῖς; εὖθυν' ἐπὶ τοῦτον, ἄγε, Μοῖσα, οὖρον ἐπέων
εὐκλέα. παροιχομένων γὰρ ἀνέρων
30 ᾠοῖδαι καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλὰ σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν,
Βασσίδαισιν ἅ τ' οὐ σπανίζει: (N. 6.26-31)

I hope
by having spoken of great things, to have struck the target,
as if having shot from a bow. Upon this man shoot a stiff,
well-famed gust of words, Muse. For even when men have passed on,
30 songs and stories protect for them their noble deeds,
which the Bassidae do not lack.

⁸¹ In Pindar, see O. 9.82, referring to the linguistic abilities of the poet. For more generally "linguistic capacity" the comparanda are later, e.g., Arist. *Rhet.* 1362b 14; Men. 578; and "meaning of language" at Lys. 10.7.

⁸² Konstantakos (2004) 97-105: Plut. *Conv. sept. sap.* 146F, also at *De aud.* 38B, *De garrul.* 506c, and *Comm. in Hes. Op.* fr. 89 Sandbach; Diog. Laert. I.105. For full bibliography see Konstantakos (2004) 97-99.

⁸³ On the figure of hypomnesis or "reminder," see Hubbard (1995a) 47 with further references.

We note here the use of the arrow shooting metaphor (28), which I explain in the next chapter as a signpost for enigmatic discourse. In Olympian 2, that metaphor famously conveys an *ainos*, but here, I think, the image calls attention to a *lusis* or riddling solution. The general solution from above, language, is now refined into a specific instantiation: performed speech, whether “songs or stories.” The transmission of one’s deeds that is offered by the performance of various forms of language imbues humans with a kind of immortality that resembles but is not identical to the immortality of the gods.

We can note here the Pindaric speaker’s generalizing attitude toward the effectiveness and thus truthfulness of poetic speech in representing and preserving action. Such an attitude stands in stark contrast with the speaker of Nemean 7, who authorized his style against the untrustworthy and “un-turned” poetic output of Homer. The dialogue initiated by the poetic speaker here authorizes a broad strand of tradition. Nagy argues that we should understand *logoi* (30) here and *logioi* (“wordsmiths”) below (47) as “masters of prose” who exist in parallel with “masters of song” (*aiodoi*) such as epinician poets.⁸⁴ If so, then Nemean 6 stages a very different kind of literary dialogue from Nemean 7; not only does the text articulate language as what elevates humans next to gods; it the even directly acknowledges the power of other texts and performances to memorialize the deeds of victors.

Human immortality, which ought to be a contradiction in terms, arises from our capacity for language and is carried out as the major *topos* for the rest of the ode.⁸⁵ Such a statement

⁸⁴ Nagy (1990) 222-226.

⁸⁵ E.g., on the widespread fame of the Aeginetans: *πλατεῖαι πάντοθεν λογίοισιν ἐντὶ πρόσδοι νᾶσον εὐκλέα τάνδε κοσμεῖν* (47-48) “wide on all sides are the avenues for storytellers to adorn this famous island.” Later: *ὄνυμ’ αὐτῶν πέταται δ’ ἐπὶ τε χθόνα καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης τηλόθεν* (50-51) “their name flies across the land and seas from afar.” Finally, at line 59, the speaker calls himself an *angelos*

perpetuates a very old idea about the nature of language, which Vladimir Toporov has discussed as the possible Indo-European literary *topos* of a medium between gods and humans.⁸⁶ In the Homeric poems, “divine names” are given to certain creatures or places (these are then contrasted with human names), but the trope appears productive in Indo-European poetics more broadly.⁸⁷ Thus in this respect too the deployment of enigmatic speech initiates a literary dialogue.

It is possible to see in this reference that the speaker is positioning himself between gods and humans as a sort of divine representative or *mantis*, but looking at the actual logic of the poem, I am not convinced. For rather than making a claim about his own technical knowledge, the speaker instead generalizes about the unreliability of signs twice in the prooimion: 1.) that what fate has written is unknowable (6-7) and 2.) that crops, just like signs, change over time (10-11). These are the claims of a non-professional interpreter who propounds *ainigmata* over *manteia*, a competitive dynamic I discussed in the Introduction.

These claims are similar to the ones in Olympian 12 and Nemean 11 to the effect that no mortal has “reliable” or “clear” signs regarding the future.⁸⁸ The speaker never explicitly names “divination” as the specific and professionalized skill by which the future is understood. Instead he casts the role of fate as a participant in the athletic contest, the entity that “writes the goal at night” (7). Thus to know the future is an impossible task. By including this disavowal of divine interpretation in juxtaposition with an *ainigma*, the narrator makes the same kind of juxtaposition

⁸⁶ (1981) 198-199: “Auch hier bildet die Sprache, das Wort eine ‚Zwischenwelt‘, die die Sphäre des Göttlichen, des Himmlischen mit den Sphäre des Menschlichen, Irdischen verbindet. Die indoeuropäische Formel *G e d a n k e – W o r t – T a t* beschreibt diese Situation sehr genau. Das Wort, vor allem das poetische Wort lässt den menschlichen Gedanken Gestalt annehmen, der an und für sich der Welt der Goetter angehört, d.h. das göttliche Wort wird zum menschlichen Gedanken...”

⁸⁷ Toporov (1981) 201-209.

⁸⁸ See below, pp. 129-135.

that Oedipus in the *OT* makes.⁸⁹ Indeed, the specific concept of *ephamera* (6) and the trope of mortal existence as a “day” is the basis for the *ainigma* that Oedipus solves. As I have suggested in those passages, this juxtaposition sets the unskilled, popular concept of riddling practices in opposition to the more technical expertise of knowing the future. Interpretation and cognitive participation become thereby the common task of all non-experts involved in the performance.

Already two types signification – *ainigma* and divine interpretation – have been raised in the first seven lines of Nemean 6. The speaker next moves toward a third kind of signification and names the child victor (Alcimidas) as one who “uses signs” (τεκμαίρει 8)– a term which for Pindar can mean either to give, embody, or even to interpret a sign.⁹⁰ In this case, the process of signification seems relatively straightforward: the child athletic victor contains some likeness of the gods, thus he embodies a *symbolon*, which, we learn, refers to the boy’s “nobility” (τὸ συγγενές 8). This substantive adjective represents what Plato in the *Republic* described as a “doubling statement” (ἐπαμφοτέρηζον 479c), since the words refers forward (proleptic) in the ode to the victor’s relationship with his male ancestors and simultaneously backwards (analeptic) in the ode to the relationship between gods and humans (a class which includes the victor). In this way, the initial *ainigma* of the speaker, which hinges on the relationship between gods and humans, prepares the audience for the cognitive work of deciding to which group Alcimidas should be assigned.

The poetic speaker then becomes the interpreter of this *symbolon* and does so by delivering a metaphor about crop growth. As this too is an object of interpretation, we can see how, like the

⁸⁹ See above, pp. 13-17.

⁹⁰ The other Pindaric usages are at O. 6.73, where signs are given alongside a “visible road,” thus drawing upon the idea of the roadside αἶνιγμα; and O. 8.3, which refers to the “interpreting” of signs through natural phenomena; fr. 169, 4, which seems to mean “give as an example” in reference to the labors of Heracles, which anticipates the later (4th c. BCE) usage of *tekmerion* to mean “reliable sign.” On this vocabulary, see further Manetti (1993) 41f.

Homeric Hymn to Hermes, *symbolon* and *ainigma* are used together by the speaker in a way that satisfies the child-mediated model of riddling. All are engaged in the process of signification and interpretation, which proceeds from the child *qua* sign-giver and must be sustained over time by the speaker and audience in order to ensure the immortality of the victor's deeds.

This alternation of crops, the audience next learns (9-11), does not have as a referent the victor's own vicissitudes, which we might expect from Pindaric idiom, but rather those of the victor's entire familial line of male competitors, who either did or did not succeed in athletic games: Hagesimachus had a victory at Olympia (22), Socleides did not (21), and now Alkimidas has reclaimed the family name for his own generation. Thus the poetic speaker interprets the boy as his clan, the individual as the collective, and a previous loss as integral to victory and the single event as a larger set of outcomes. This instability of reference, expanding ever outward in space and time, is what drives the process of memorialization, a dialogue between present and past, in the prooimion of Nemean 6. This final *symbolon* illustrates what the initial *ainigma* withheld: that the generative force of language, specifically poetic language's capacity to proliferate and memorialize, which grants a kind of immortality to even the smallest of humans. The victor's role as *symbolon* mediates this revelation. At the same time, it is the speaker who skillfully contextualizes and even initiates the young Alcimidas' role in the larger history of his clan and city.

Though epinician poetry has always been associated with competition, this chapter showed that enigmatic discourse offers a site of competitive dialogue for the poetic speaker and previous poets. In Nemean 7 the Pindaric text competes *against* previous texts, whereas in Nemean 6 all texts "compete against" death and the language of the gods. Both represent productive conversations because they result in the delivery of praise to the victor and his clan in

different ways. In Nemean 7, the speaker's elevation of the Aeginetan hometown hero Neoptolemus honors the pentathlete Sogenes; while in Nemean 6, the athlete Alkimidas serves as a model for the poetic speaker's own sign-giving and interpretive prowess.

Chapter 2: Enigmatic Speech as an Elite Discourse

Δῆ. ταυτὶ τί ἔστι;
Πα. λόγια.
Δῆ. πάντ’;
Πα. ἐθαύμασας;
καὶ νῆ Δί’ ἔτι γέ μοῦστι κιβωτὸς πλέα.
Ἀλ. ἐμοὶ δ’ ὑπερῶον καὶ ξυνοικία δύο.

Dēmos: What are those?!

Paphlagonian: Oracles.

Dēmos: All of them?

Paphlagonian: You’re impressed? By Zeus, I have a trunk full of them.

Sausage-Seller: And I have an attic and two sheds full of them!

(Ar. *Eq.* 999-1001)

Fresh from expelling the Peisistratids from Athens, the victorious Spartan King

Cleomenes glimpsed an irresistible plunder on the Athenian acropolis. It wasn’t gold, purple, or ivory. Instead, Cleomenes grabbed for himself the oracular verses stored in the temple treasury, verses which, according to Herodotus, were formerly the private property of the Peisistratids.¹ The above parody of Aristophanes in the *Knights* suggests a similar prestige value associated with elite ownership of a type of enigmatic speech, called *logia*, a category which includes not just oracles but fabular material in verse.²

Moreover, it was not just *logia* that were “owned” by elites; a late biographical notice of Heraclitus states that he deposited his own manuscript, which I discussed last chapter as full of wordplay and enigmatic speech, in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus.³ As with all biographical notices, this may not reflect an historical event, but it does demonstrate the idea that enigmatic speech was perceived as a prestige object of some value. Other testimonia suggest that poets

¹ Hdt. 5.92; See Nagy (1990) 156-186.

² Several of the *logia* in the ensuing contest involve talking animals and the interpretation of *ainoi*.

³ Diog. Laert. 9.1 makes the same elite vs. non-elite distinction. Thus H.’s text is for the *dunamenoι* (“capable, powerful”) and not those who are *ek tou dēmōdous* (“from the common lot”).

such as Onomatocritus and Lasus played a key role composing and editing enigmatic speech as agents of the ruling elite.⁴

What did it mean for an elite to “own” enigmatic speech? Does this mean that only elites understood the secrets contained within their enigmatic speech? Such is the conclusion of certain scholars, which I find implausible.⁵ It was not the stockpiling but the performing of enigmatic speech which delivered value for elites. If, as the epinician speaker in Nemean 7 explains, choral poetry was an adornment and enigmatic speech a kind of fine craftsmanship, then it was the patron who became responsible for adorning the wider epinician performance community with such craftsmanship. The performance offered an occasion for public beneficence and in the case of elite patrons, a kind of messaging, in which enigmatic speech signified “just enough,” as Anaximenes might say.

As last chapter discussed, insofar as enigmatic speech is poetic speech, the utterance of enigmatic forms initiates a literary dialogue with past poetic speakers. This movement is typical of Greek lyric poetry generally, which is obsessed with relitigating the present in terms of a reconstituted, notionalized past. We could designate this interaction a vertical axis of enigmatic function, which represents a thin yet meaningful sliver of the vertical axis of lyric function within epinician poetry.

But enigmatic speech also frequently addresses, represents, or manipulates the here and now of its utterance. In that horizontal frame, a major dynamic entails a speaker deploying

⁴ Hdt. 7.6.3-4; Nagy (1990) 169-174.

⁵ e.g., Battisti (1990) 5-6, “Those who do not share this [aristocratic] code are excluded from poetic understanding and enjoyment.” Perhaps Battisti only means that the text constructs non-elites as separate from the relationship between poet and elite patron, and “poetic understanding” is not commensurate with “comprehension.” Still, I reject this interpretation in my discussion of Olympian 2 below, arguing that enigmatic speech represents non-elites as essential to the transmission of praise poetry.

enigmatic speech in order to mediate and advise the concerns of an elite. This holds true in Greek literature generally: riddle contests happen mostly between kings; riddle solvers represented in myth are mainly elites, and Delphic respondents' access to enigmatic utterances arises from their elite status; similarly elite are symposiasts who toss out riddles as leisurely game.

Thus, it is certainly true that enigmatic speech was often *represented as* a discourse consumed and produced by elites, and that interlocutors in an enigmatic dialogue often refer to themselves as *sophoi* or *sunetoi*, bywords of elite discourse in Archaic Greece. But even *qua* elite discourse, we can observe that enigmatic speech is deeply concerned with non-elite behavior and the relationship between elites and the broader community. Consider for example, Theognis' account of the ship of state, the first use of an *ainigma* term in Greek literature, which allegorizes the polis for both an elite interpreter and a non-elite one:

ταῦτά μοι ἡνίχθω κεκρυμμένα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν.
γινώσκοι δ' ἄν τις καὶ κακὸς⁶ ἄν σοφὸς ᾖ.
(Thgn. 681-2)

Let these things be uttered enigmatically, hidden for the nobles,
but someone, even an inferior may understand, if he is *sophos*.

In this same vein, we can consider Hesiod's famous *ainos* of the hawk and the nightingale, which he initially addresses to *basileis*:

νῦν δ' αἶνον βασιλεῦσιν ἐρέω φρονέουσι καὶ αὐτοῖς: (Hes. Op. 201)

And now I will tell a fable to kings, even those who are familiar with it.

⁶ Thus I follow the text of West *IEG* ad 682, which prints the emendation of Brunck (κακός). Cf. Nagy (1985) 22-26 who prefers to read κακόν with the mss. The former better suits the adverbial καὶ; the point is not that a wise man could recognize "even evil" (Nagy has to resort to "future evil," which does not suit the very present political disruption), but that even a base man could understand the nature of what the speaker has just allegorized.

The question of what group or individual each bird represents has never been definitively settled: one line of thought holds that the eagle is Zeus and the nightingale humanity; another that the actual addressee is Perseus.⁷ It is certainly true that later in the poem the Hesiodic speaker reinterprets the parable expressly *for* Perseus, claiming that “it is for fish and beasts and birds to eat one another. For there is no dike among them.”⁸ Thus even while speaking to elites, the Hesiodic speaker deploys enigmatic speech to put into conversation with one another different audience groups, with meaning conveyed for even those outside the initial, narrowly-defined addressee group.

As I will argue in this chapter, the staging of elite dialogue is marked by the speaker’s designation of an “in-group,” who are praised in cognitive terms such as *sophoi* or *sunetoi*. This dialogue can then stage the concerns of a small elite audience, as in Olympian 6, or it can attempt a kind of conversation between elites and non-elites, as is the case with Olympian 2. A final example considers a hybrid dialogue, Pythian 9, where an elite dialogue is deployed after a literary dialogue.

A. Olympian 6: True Names & Elite Discourse

The Sixth Olympian was written for Hagesias of the Iamidae, a prestigious Syracusan clan who claimed descent from the legendary seer Iamos. In what follows, I show the speaker setting up the clan as elites by claiming to traverse a road that sets him apart from others and then targeting wordplay at that very group. This deployment of the cognitive road designates an elite in-group including speaker and clan:

⁷ For recent discussions, see Steiner (2012) 3-11 and Kurke (2011) 403-404. For the articulation of the view that the fable speaks directly to Perseus, see Hubbard (1995b).

⁸ Hes. Op. 277-8

ὦ Φίντις, ἀλλὰ ζεῦξον ἤδη μοι σθένος ἡμιόνων,
 ἧ τάχος, ὄφρα κελεύθῳ τ' ἐν καθαρᾷ
 βάσομεν ὄκχον, ἵκωμαί τε πρὸς ἀνδρῶν
 25 καὶ γένος: κεῖναι γὰρ ἐξ ἄλλῃν ὁδὸν ἀγεμονεῦσαι
 ταύταν ἐπίστανται, στεφάνους ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ
 ἐπεὶ δέξαντο (O. 6.22-27)

Phintis, harness for me now the power of oxen,
 by which on the cleared path
 I will swiftly propel a chariot and ahead of men reach
 25 even the family. For these [mules] know this path apart from others, having led
 the way, after the crowns at Olympia
 they received.

Mackie is thus right to emphasize the encomiastic nature of the path image: this passage and the previous one both resolve in praise of the *laudandus* and his clan.⁹ This passage also signals a call to interpretation, and the path of *sophia*, as elsewhere, embodies the cognitive abilities of an enigmatic speaker, abilities which distinguish his own voice from that of others, as I discussed in the Introduction. This encomium entails as well a call to cognitive participation, since there follows a play on the name of Hagesias and shortly thereafter, that of Iamos, as I now discuss.¹⁰

The account of Iamos' birth in Olympian 6 is perhaps the most widely remarked-upon instance of wordplay in Pindar.¹¹ Among other examples of Pindaric wordplay, however, and indeed, of wordplay in general in Greek literature, it stands unique, both because of its extended nature and because of how it functions as integral to narrative manipulation. It is this narrative manipulation, working in concert with wordplay, I argue, that stages enigmatic speech as a site of elite discourse.

⁹ Mackie (2003) 79 cites both passages as an example of the Pindaric speaker presenting himself as a prophet. It is certainly true that the image of the path holds relevance to the prophetic arts, as I discuss below in regards to Pythian 9 and Olympian 7, and next chapter. However, I understand the primary mode of self-fashioning here to be that of "enigmatic competition" – an approach which allows me to incorporate decidedly non-prophetic utterances into the persona, i.e., those of Pythian 11.

¹⁰ On the pun on Hagesias, see Appendix ad. loc.

¹¹ The most relevant discussions include Barkhuizen (1975) 36-37; Carne-Ross (1976); Segal (1986); Salvador (1997); Adorjani (2014) 189-219, with comprehensive bibliography.

The passage demonstrates the following stylistic features of narrative, morphology, and syntax which, taken together, designate the passage as enigmatic speech: the paronomasia of similar sounds within a reasonable separation of words, the presence of oxymorons or oppositional pairs in the immediate context, a specific reference to the act of naming, and finally, the “enigmatic comprehension check,” my own term, which indicates the reporting of an internal audience’s reaction to enigmatic speech, and which in narrative texts is almost always failed. I quote the passage in its entirety below, marking the key wordplay with underline and ancillary devices as bolded.

ἦλθεν δ' ὑπὸ σπλάγχχνων ὑπ' ὠδίνος τ' ἐρατᾶς Ἰαμος
 ἐς φάος αὐτίκα. τὸν μὲν κνίζομένα
 45 λείπε χαμαί: δύο δὲ γλαυκῶπες αὐτὸν
 δαιμόνων βουλαῖσιν ἐθρέψαντο δράκοντες ἀμεμφεῖ
ἰῶ μελισσᾶν καδόμενοι. βασιλεὺς δ' ἐπεὶ
 πετραέσσης ἐλαύνων **ἵκετ'** ἐκ **Πυθῶνος**, ἅπαντας ἐν οἴκῳ
 εἶρετο παῖδα, τὸν Εὐάδνα τέκοι: Φοίβου γὰρ αὐτὸν φᾶ γεγάκειν
 50 πατρός, περὶ θνατῶν δ' ἔσεσθαι μάντιν ἐπιχθονίοις
 ἔξοχον, οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκλείψειν γενεάν.
 ὥς ἄρα μάνυε. τοὶ δ' οὐτ' ὦν ἀκοῦσαι
 οὐτ' ἰδεῖν εὐχοντο πεμπταῖον γεγεννημένον. ἀλλ' ἐν
 κέκρυπτο γὰρ σχοίνῳ βατιᾷ τ' ἐν ἀπειράτῳ,
 55 ἰῶν ξανθαῖσι καὶ παμπορφύροις ἀκτῖσι βεβρεγμένος ἄβρὸν
 σῶμα: τὸ καὶ κατεφάμιξεν καλεῖσθαι νιν χρόνῳ σύμπαντι μάτηρ
τοῦτ' ὄνυμ' ἀθάνατον. (O.6.43-57)

And from [Evadne's] womb by **labor lovely** emerged Iamos,
 straight into the light. But she, being wounded/anxious,
 45 left him on the ground. Yet two grey-eyed serpents
 at the wishes of the divine, nursed and cared for him with the blameless
venom of bees. And when the king [Aepytus]
 returned **by driving back from rocky Pytho**, he asked all in his house
 about the child, the one Evadne bore. For he said that he had been begotten with Phoebus
 50 as father, and that for earth-dwellers he would be a seer excelling above mortals,
 nor would he ever abandon his race.
 So he revealed. But they professed neither to have heard
 nor to have seen the five day old child. No, for he
 had been hidden on a reed-bed, in an unexplored thicket,

55 his soft form awash in the golden and purple radiance of violets.
And on that account his mother declared that for all time he be called
this immortal name.

First, we can note that the speaker's deployment of etymologizing is prolonged rather than being concentrated to a single line. Unlike that of the *Greek Anthology* and the fragments of Heraclitus, Pindaric wordplay can be more diffuse and can accumulate multiple meanings.¹² And even though fourteen lines may seem overly diffuse, the example has always been accepted as obvious. This obviousness probably stems from the fact that the text marks the etymologizing explicitly. One name – stated openly at the opening (Ἴταμος 43) and suppressed at the end (τοῦτ' ὄνυμ' ἀθάνατον 57) – frames the entire passage, which suggests that the birth myth is more properly a name myth, the significance of which I discuss below in regards to the naming ritual embedded into the text. Another explanation for the enigmatic speech's obviousness is that the larger unit is divided by two instances of paronomasia *iō* and *iōn* into three manageable sub-units of 4, 8, and 2 lines, respectively. Such careful framing is critical for the wide recognition of enigmatic speech, so that readers and listeners can mentally process the boundaries of the enigmatic content and thus undertake the work of appreciation or interpretation, as the case may be.

Second, as I just mentioned, etymological wordplay does not have to be “one and done” that is, it does not have to provide a definitive *etymos logos* (“true word”). In fact, for an oral performance, it makes more sense for the enigmatic speech to be concentrated over several lines, in order to maximize the chance at some recognition of the virtuosity on display (even if the

¹² The riddles of the *AP* have received little recent attention outside of Berra (2008) 631-725. Most are short and straightforward, several are more prolonged and complicated. As an example of the latter, *AP* XIV.109 parodies the tragic plot of Soph. *Antigone* in order to obscure the events of *Odyssey* IX. Whether Heraclitus' use of enigmatic speech was restricted to single phrases and isolated images (e.g. “the name of the bow” (LXXIX = D-K 48); “the name of Zeus” (CXVIII = D-K 32) or suffused his larger *logos* remains to be proven. Kahn (1979) 91-95 has argued in favor sustained wordplay via ambiguity in Heraclitus.

meaning is not fully understood, or the subject's name is forgotten after 14 lines.) the Pindaric speaker offers two explicit and, I would argue, one implicit etymology for Iamos' name: the first being "poison" in line 47 (ἰῶ), the second being "violets"¹³ in line 55 (ἰῶν), and the third, being the exclamatory sound ΙΩ, which is present sonically in both of these and is associated with expressions of despair and the invocation of aid of deities.¹⁴ Though this last etymology is not explicit, the context of maternal anguish and divine aid certainly renders it appropriate to this passage. It is this last, implicit etymology that ties the passage together around a central, divine parent. In fact, the use of Apollo's epithet, "light" (Φοῖβου 44) connects the arresting images of the passage: the light of birth (φάος 44) and the light beams (ἄκτῖσι 55) of the flowers (ἄκτῖσι 55) which, according to (τὸ καὶ 56) his mother, give Iamos his name. This imagery calls to mind the ties between all seers and Apollo, but will be appropriated by the poet to enact his own identity as a manipulator of enigmatic speech, as I discuss below.

Third, following the discussion of the relationship between enigmatic form and tradition in the introduction, I here reiterate that enigmatic speech often incorporates cultural conventions, rituals, or even taboos.¹⁵ In this passage the point of cultural reference is most obviously the myth itself, which would have been very familiar at Olympia (though Pindar's version is the

¹³ There is some debate whether this word indicates our "violet," since the flower described seems to be different from our modern version; see Gildersleeve (1890) 177; for further references, see Salvador (1997) 38 n2.

¹⁴ O'Hara (1996) 39 n217 notes that both Apollonius and Callimachus make similar puns on words containing ιω/ιo. One striking feature of the passage from Pindar is how the paronomasia is placed at the beginning of each line, something which happens very consciously in poets writing after the Hellenistic tradition, as O'Hara discusses. That it happens here would have afforded not a visual impact (in oral performance), but a rhythmical one. Colometry dictates the initial word of each of these lines follows hiatus, which lends emphasis and creates repetition. For the association of the vocable ΙΩ with (gendered) despair in tragedy, see e.g., Aesch. *Ag* 1305; Soph. *Ant.* 850; Eur. *Ph* 1290.

¹⁵ For example, *AP* XIV.28 uses the setting of an athletic contest. I discussed last chapter how the works of Homer form the basis of much enigmatic material; this relationship is oppositional, as the enigmatic tradition is responsible for the death of Homer. On ritual, see Introduction pp. 24-26.

earliest extant telling and seems to have become the authorized version, according to Pausanias, suggesting its novelty¹⁶).

Less obvious, and perhaps less certain is the phrase *pemptaion gegenēmon* (53): Why is Iamos described as “five days old”? More importantly, who is making this claim? The participle descriptor “having been born five days,” which appears in indirect discourse governed by “they professed” (εὔχοντο 53), must logically belong to the narrator’s perspective rather than that of those who do the reporting. (That is to say, the onlookers who claim never to have heard or seen the child would not also claim to know that he is five days old.) This switch of focalization from internal speaker to narrator, a sort of narrative manipulation, along with the specificity of the numerical value suggests that the “five days” (and not just “a few days”) is being emphasized by the text for some reason.

Numbers, number games, and even number allegories are well attested among Greek riddling forms.¹⁷ Though mystical, Pythagorean symbolism is not to be ruled out (as I discussed last chapter with Nemean 7) in Pindar’s use of numbers, I can detect nothing so esoteric at work here. Rather, the phrase is suggestive of a common cultural practice. The fifth day after birth was, at least by some accounts, when children were named, as part of a ceremony called the *amphidromia*.¹⁸ The possible reference here to a naming ceremony is especially significant in the context of Pindar’s own etymologizing, which frames and, I would argue, displaces a “Delphic

¹⁶ Paus. VI.2.5

¹⁷ For example, one *ainigma* in the *AP* (XIV.8) consists only of telling the numbers on a die; arithmetical problems are juxtaposed rather freely with what we would consider more proper riddles. One of the oldest attested Greek “proto-riddles” is Odysseus’ description of the cattle of the Sun (*Od.* 12.129-131), where, as West (2007) 371-372 argues, numbers are used to suggest the days of the year. See also above on N. 7 pp. 60-62.

¹⁸ Hamilton (1984) contains the most thorough discussion of ancient sources and modern scholarship. There are actually several different days given by ancient sources for the naming ceremony: the fifth (schol. to Pl. *Tht.* 160E; *Suda* s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια), seventh (Hesych. s.v. δρομιάμπιον ἡμαρ) or tenth (schol. ad Ar. *Lys.* 757) are all reported. In some cases the physical “running around” happens on a separate day from the naming ceremony. Hamilton (1984) 250, however, includes a public feast where the child is named as essential to the ceremony.

moment.” King Aepytus is reported (47-48) to have returned from Delphi, where he learned of the child’s divine parentage and his destiny to become a great *mantis*. We might expect the revelation of the child’s name to have come straight from Delphi, since the manipulation and reinterpretation of names is a favorite subject of the oracle riddles that have been preserved in Herodotus.¹⁹ Here, however, the work of the oracle in manipulating names is displaced by the True Name wordplay of the narrator. This “displacement of Delphi” points to another narrative manipulation in the passage, which I argue is enigmatic because of how it presents an audience who does not comprehend.

The denial or incomprehension of listeners, a kind of dialogue, is conventional to various kinds of enigmatic utterances embedded within a larger narrative. In the present passage the lack of awareness is internal to the narrative, and it takes the form of a denial rather than a misunderstanding or a lack of comprehension: “they professed not to see or hear” (τοὶ δ’ οὐτ’ ὄν ακουσαῖ οὐτ’ ἰδεῖν εὔχοντο 53-54). This strange response is incongruous with how the narrator reports Aepytus’ speech act (ὥς ἄρα μάνυε 52). In Pindaric usage, along with other fifth century poets, the verb *mēnuō* (here the Doric variant *manuō*) commonly means “to reveal,” “deliver news” and not “challenge” or “confront,” which seems to be how the members of the house interpret the speech.²⁰ In slightly later Greek, especially the Attic orators, the verb does attain the meaning “bring information against someone,” which would warrant such a denial.²¹ But this

¹⁹ E.g., Herodotus’ claim that the Delphic oracle knew about the true “Libyan” meaning of Battus’ name (“king”) (Hdt.4.155)

²⁰ P. 1.93 on how the power of song reveals and preserves the stories of humans; I.8.55 on how Achilles revealing the road to Aegina; N. 9.4 on how the athletic victory “proclaims a message” (αὐδᾶν μανύει); A very close parallel to the present passage is *HMerc* 264-265, where Hermes denies “seeing or hearing” about Apollo’s cattle and then says that he cannot deliver any news about them: οὐκ ἄν μηνύσαιμι (265). On other μανύω / μηνύω revelations in Greek poetry, see Soph. *OT*. 102, where the verb describes Apollo’s prophecy about cleansing the city of pollution; E *Ba*. 1029, which refers to the speech of a messenger about to reveal bad news.

²¹ e.g. Lys.6.23; And.1.20; Pl. *Leg*.730d

usage requires a mediopassive form or most commonly, a complementary phrase such as “against someone” (κατά τινος).²²

Therefore, if we are correct to take the verb *manue* (μάνυε 52) to mean what it does elsewhere in Pindaric usage, “to reveal,” why does the narrator portray the internal audience as responding with a denial? Why deny a revelation of one’s superior? From a mechanical or economical point of view, the denial is not necessary to the telling of the myth. Whereas earlier in the myth it might have made sense for underlings to deny involvement based on Aepeytus’ anger at Evadne, now that same child is, according to the king’s own speech, a sign of divine favor (περὶ θνατῶν δ’ ἔσεσθαι μάντιν ἐπιχθονίοις/ ἔξοχον, οὐδέ ποτ’ ἐκλείψειν γενεάν 50-51). In order to explain this incongruity, I suggest that the denial of the internal audience is manufactured by the narrator in order present the name of Iamos as an enigmatic object of interpretation. Specifically, those in the external audience who perceive the wordplay are here offered an internal dialogue as a foil for their own reaction to the text. The seeing and hearing denied by the members of house of Aepeytus are carried out by those who appreciate the wordplay and imagery (sounds and sights) skillfully woven by the narrator. Thus wordplay is cleverly integrated with and signposted by narrative speech presentation.

A fourth feature that marks this passage as enigmatic is the presence of two pairs of gently paradoxical phrases (some prefer the term “kenning” usually used to describe English poetry, but this term does not necessarily imply a contradiction): “lovely labor” (ὠδῖνός τ’ ἐρατᾶς 43) and “blameless poison” (ἀμεμφεῖ ἰῶ 44). Fascinatingly, the adjectives chosen to constitute each oxymoron are qualities conventionally ascribed by the poet to different aspects of the epinician community. Erotic language, including the adjective *erat-*, is used frequently to

²² Mediopassive: Thuc. 1.20; with prepositional phrase: Thuc. 6.60

describe the bodies of the chorus in motion and perhaps even reinforce the social order by stressing the innate beauty of the chorus leaders, who obtained their position by their station in the community.²³ By contrast, words describing blame are associated with the negative, *phthonos*-driven reaction of the community against the returning victor.²⁴ These examples of compounded strings of oxymorons are quite common in the wider enigmatic tradition and once again point to the fact that something more is happening here than simple paronomasia.²⁵

In sum, there are three kinds of displacement at work in this passage, all of which contribute to the enigmatic presentation of the wordplay. First, conventionally negative descriptors associated with nouns like “birth pang” and “poison” are displaced in favor of positive qualities associated with epinician performance. This displacement stresses the miracle of Iamos’ birth and also ties the victor to his ancestor in being “blameless.” Second, the specific enigmatic content of the oracle (which a Greek audience would have expected) is displaced in favor of the paraphrase by Aepeytus. This enigmatic content is instead transposed into the words of the narrator via several plays on Iamos’ name and the oxymorons just mentioned. Lastly, the normal reading of “professed not to know or hear,” which an audience would understand as a simple denial, is here displaced by the lack of comprehension that one experiences when hearing or seeing an enigmatic text.

Most commentators confine their discussion of the etymologizing in Olympian 6 to the bounds of these few lines, not least because of the close proximity of several prominent examples, and the explicitness of the naming carried out by Euadne, to which Pindar draws

²³ For the eroticism of choral poetry as a reinforcement of social order, see Kurke (2012) 226f. For ἐπαρ- adjectives describing the choral performance, and likely also the bodies of the choreuts in Pindar see: O. 10.99; N. 6.12; I. 2 31.

²⁴ See the lexical survey of Bulman (1992)

²⁵ Some Greek riddles are composed entirely of these; e.g. Plato *Rep.* V.479B, discussed above, pp. 28-29.

attention with careful framing and ancillary wordplays.²⁶ This is a well-marked system which have been conducive in performance to a general audience of Greek-speakers. Even if one missed the first wordplay, it would have been possible to appreciate the second, along with the striking light/dark imagery and the explicit reference to Iamos' name at the end. This is to say that, even without catching every last wordplay, the narrator is effective in deploying wordplay.

By emphasizing the “displacement” at work in these lines, my intention is not to argue for enigmatic speech as a kind of narrative or linguistic disruption in epinician poetry (or in any poetry, for that matter). Rather—quite the opposite—by speaking enigmatically, the narrator integrates subjective and objective concerns.²⁷ Specifically, he praises the innate gift of seercraft in Hagesias' family (an objective concern) by taking on the Delphic responsibilities of presenting and enacting that speech (subjective).

Thus far I have only tracked *how* the narrator displaces and appropriates Apolline authority over enigmatic speech without elaborating in detail *to what effect* and *why* he might be doing so. I now suggest that this main dialogue is followed by a separate dialogue that deploys enigmatic speech as elite discourse. Thus, the main dialogue (43-57) which stages the Iamidae clan's founder's naming as a dialogue is framed on the one end by a declaration of the clan's elite identity (22-27) as seers and on the other by an example of wordplay that directly speaks to that identity:

ἐκάλεσσε Ποσειδᾶν' εὐρυβίαν,
ὄν πρόγονον, καὶ τοξοφόρον Δάλου θεοδμάτας σκοπόν,
60 αἰτέων λαοτρόφον τιμάν τιν' ἔᾱ κεφαλᾷ,

²⁶ Griffith (2006) 341 n101 has proposed a pun on Hagesias' name (ἄγεμονεῦσαι v. 24). Moreover, the notion of “hybridity” which informs Griffith's larger point about mules is potentially an enigmatic idea relevant to this poem, since mules, seers (as part representatives of military and divine authority), and Aineas the “mixing bowl” all represent the idea to varying degrees. For further discussion see Adorjáni (2014) 190.

²⁷ On this unity as programmatic for Pindar, see Hubbard (1985) 133-162.

νυκτὸς ὑπαίθριος. ἀντεφθέγγατο δ' ἀρτιεπῆς
πατρία ὄσσα, μετάλλασέν τέ νιν... (O.6.58-62)

60 He called out to broad-force Poseidon,
his grandfather, and to the bow-wielding watcher of god-built Delos,
asking for a people-nourishing honor for himself,
in the blazing night. And his father's voice answered *artiepēs*,
and he addressed him in turn...

This passage departs significantly from the prolonged, carefully marked and generally agreed upon wordplay previously discussed. Indeed, the wordplay of this dialogue is restricted to two words, is “marked” only after the fact, and, as far as I can determine, has yet to receive any critical notice. It arises once again, from the verbal skill of the narrator: specifically, how the narrator phrases the object of young Iamos's request: λαοτρόφον τιμάν τιν' / λαοτρόφον τι μάντιν (60: “some people-nourishing honor”/ “to be a people-nourishing mantis, somehow”).²⁸ Thus, rather than paronomasia, as above, this wordplay functions by the ambiguous division of words. Since there is no possible way to construe the already adventurous re-segmented Greek syntax of “a people-nourishing *mantis*, somehow” (λαοτρόφον τι μάντιν) with what follows (“on his head” ἔᾱ κεφαλᾷ 60), it is important to acknowledge that this kind of play is disruptive to the performed meaning of the text. Moreover, I can find no parallel example of such wordplay type in Pindar, though several examples work from similar principles, such as the “breaking up” of a single word into several related forms or the suggestion of one word (usually a name) by means of homophony (O'Hara terms this “suppression”).²⁹

²⁸ Some in the audience might also have detected in the phrase μάν τιν' ἔᾱ (60) the toponym “Mantineia.” This would be more disruptive than τιμάν τιν' to the syntax (requiring the merging of three words instead of two) and the city, as far as I can tell, has no direct relevance to the myth or the context of the poem. The source of the Alpheus (the river Iamos stands in) is, however, close to Mantineia, and, further afield, Pausanias does report (VIII.10.3) that a King Aepytus (the grandson, it seems, of this poem's Aepytus) loses his kingdom by sacrilegiously entering the shrine of Poseidon at Mantineia. Moreover, toponyms are favorite targets of riddles, and seem to have captured the interest of Pindar, as Barkhuizen (1975) 92-104 suggests thirteen instances of etymologizing of geographical names in Pindar.

²⁹ For the breaking up of a word as wordplay see N. 3.21-23: Ἡρακλῆος (21)...ἥρως (22)...κλυτάς (23). For suppression, see e.g., O. 2.25 βρόμῳ (the noun “thunder”), referring to Dionysius' epithet βρόμιος. See also Watkins

Undoubtedly, if such wordplay occurred in isolation, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to discern. But as with the nameplay of Iamos, the narrative provides key “environmental” factors when considering wordplay, which I argue, authorize this kind of playful listening. First, Iamos here enters into dialogue with the god of prophecy, who happens to be his father. Among oracular, and especially Apolline dialogues an audience is culturally predisposed to listen for various kinds of wordplay.³⁰ The passage thus delivers here what the previous etymological play displaced, namely, enigmatic speech in an oracular context.

Second, when Apollo does respond, the narrator describes the god as *artiepēs*, a rare adjective occurring only twice in Pindar.³¹ It means literally “close-worded,” and so some translators have preferred to read “glib-tongued” *vel sim.*, although the original sense is to be preferred. Apollo parses Iamos’ words “closely” and gives his son exactly what he, Iamos, has asked for – and what Apollo has already revealed him to be—a *man tin/ mantin*. I should also mention that what I am calling “re-segmentation” wordplay is very similar to the phenomenon of “kledonomanacy” (the mystical power of common names, often homophonous words, to reveal truths about the universe), a phenomenon which has been discussed in Aeschylus, Herodotus, and later writers.³² A further point in favor of a performance audience recognizing this wordplay is that terms related to the title *mantis* occur seven times elsewhere in this poem (five times

(1995) on Ennius (p. 184) and Hes. *Op.* 1 (p. 189), who describes wordplays similar to Saussurean hypograms or perhaps, Verlan, the poetic argot associated with French hip-hop, whose name reverses the syllables of *l’invers*.

³⁰ See e.g. above pp. 53-54, which briefly considers Apolline topography as part of the performance context for enigmatic speech in Nemean 7.

³¹ cf. I.5.46, in reference to the tongue of the poet, eight lines before a likely paronomasia (καλλίνικον 54...Κλεονίκου 55).

³² For discussion of this term, see Zeitlin (1982) and Peradotto (1969) on Aeschylus; more generally, Woodhead (1928) 22-23; O’Hara (1996) 13-14.

before this occurrence; and three times in the accusative singular noun form μάντιν), a fact which may support the plausibility of a listener discerning an echo embedded in this phrase.³³

Besides language-level concerns, the other reason this wordplay ought to be taken seriously is because of the socio-historical context of the poem, which commentators are beginning to understand as a reflection of the relationship between two elite groups, kings and seers, specifically in regards to colonization projects. This relationship has recently (2013) been elaborated by Margaret Foster, whose argument I summarize here in the hopes of extending it through consideration of the present wordplay. At the beginning of the poem, Pindar praises the victor as a *sunokistēr* (5), “a co-colonizer,” of Syracuse and as a seer, the “steward of the mantic altar of Zeus at Pisa.”³⁴ This joint title is has always been problematic because Syracuse had been founded centuries earlier, according to tradition, by a legendary figure named Archias. The generally accepted solution had been to read this title as applied to Hagesias’ family, who, a scholiast posited, had been involved in this original colonization.³⁵

By contrast, Foster proposed that Hagesias should be understood instead as a partner in colonization for Hieron’s recent settlement at Aetna (which was ongoing in the 470s and 460s³⁶) for several reasons. First, it must be acknowledged that Aetna does not play a major role in the poem, as it does in the Chromius odes. Syracuse however, does appear prominently in this poem, and Foster notes “Pindar’s repeated synthesis of Syracuse and Aitna elsewhere.”³⁷ Second, the theory is at least historically plausible. As we know from Herodotus and other historians, seers in

³³ μαντεῖα 5; μάντιν 13; μάντιν 17; μαντευσόμενος 38; μάντιν 50; μάννε 52; μαντοσύνας 66.

³⁴ O. 6.5-6

³⁵ An idea supported by Hornblower (2004) 185.

³⁶ For the idea that settlement at Aetna was an ongoing process even after the official foundation date of 476, see Hubbard (1992) 80.

³⁷ Foster (2013) 295, citing as examples, P. 3.68; N. 1.1-6, where “Aetnean Zeus” is also invoked.

archaic and classical Greece were highly desired not only for their “direct line” to the divine, but also for possessing a talismanic power in battle, indispensable gifts for any would-be colonizer. Indeed, seers wielded real political authority and were often a source of conflict for or even a threat to ruling powers, sometimes even striking out on their own as splinter mercenary groups.³⁸ Lastly, Hagesias constitutes an ideal settler of Aetna because of his split Doric/Syracusan heritage, as referenced by the final lines of the ode, which are the only explicit link between Hagesias and Aetna. Granted these compelling socio-historical data, all the same, one might ask, does Hagesias’ level of idealization in this ode really rise to the level of co-colonizer with Hieron? Although not all commentators have agreed with this historicizing reading, it does support the enigmatic environment which I am arguing for the reception of Olympian 6, where the epinician performance speaks simultaneously to several different audiences.³⁹

For Hieron, there is a potential unease in Pindar praising the political authority granted to one of his famous citizens as a seer in the context of his ongoing colonization projects. This same potential unease seems to be refracted in the Iamos myth, which, Foster argues, prepares the audience for Iamos to take over Aepeytus’ throne. By this reading, when Iamos here asks for a “people-nourishing honor for my head,” he is actually asking for the right to kingship over Arcadia. This may be pushing the text too far, since “people-nourishing” is an adjective unique to Pindar and does not immediately—at least to my mind—denote “kingship.”⁴⁰ On the basis of recent studies that untangle the discourses around colonization, I would extend the possibility

³⁸ Foster (2013) 304 notes that Amphiaraus expels Adrastus in Nemean 9 and stresses that the Melampodids (Melampus, Amphiaraus and Theoclymenus) are all negative, power-hungry exempla in contrast with the good Iamidai seers.

³⁹ Notably, Adorjányi (2014) 34 n15 considers the theory “wenig glaubwürdig,” but does not rule it out altogether.

⁴⁰ The only other occurrence of the adjective is at O 5.4, where it describes the city Camarina. A possible comparandum is the memorable description of “bad kings” in the *Iliad* (1.231) as “people devourers” *dēmaboroi*. Likewise, Benveniste (2016) 323 discusses the Greek idea of kings as “providers” and compares the English word “lord” as deriving from OE *hlāfweard* or “loaf guardian.”

that it makes more sense to understand Iamos here as requesting his own colony, since words used to describe “growth” or “nourishment” recall the sort of vegetal imagery commonly used to describe human colonization.⁴¹

In either case, Foster’s larger point still stands: Iamos asks Apollo for a kind of political authority that he does not ultimately receive. The seer becomes an ally rather than a rival to king Aepeytus. If we accept the reasonable historical context of Hieron’s ongoing colonization at Aetna, then the staging of these dialogues speaks directly to elite concerns within Syracusan political hierarchy and the nominal partnership between ruler and *sunoikistēr*. Moreover, the wordplay itself pronounces (for those who notice it) the reinforcement of the *status quo*, since an appreciation for the double meaning allows Iamos to have been a non-threatening entity all along (and not just before he received the mantic office), in much the same way that the baby Iamos was said to have been nurtured by “blameless poison.” Thus, while not “etymological” in our modern sense, the wordplay does assert an *etymos logos* insofar as it distinguishes the threatening role of seer from the “true,” beneficial one to which the victor and his family lay claim.

In sum, an appreciation for a plausible historical context behind Olympian 6 shows how Pindaric wordplay might have addressed a spectrum of interpreters. Specifically, we have seen two extremes of enigmatic speech at work within a single poem. On the one hand, the birth of Iamos episode offers a well-marked system of etymologizing framed by ancillary wordplays and narrative manipulation of internal dialogue. Such wordplay appeals to a large audience of wordplay consumers and serves the broad interest of delivering praise to the victor and his

⁴¹ See further Ch. 3 pp. 139-141 below.

family through association and cognitive work. On the other end of the spectrum, wordplay can be hidden within ambiguous word division of a single line, as in the repetition and echo of “mantis.” The latter wordplay speaks to a narrower audience (the Iamidae and Hieron) because it serves the narrow interests of the elites involved in managing colonization and defining the relationship between separate loci of authority (seer, tyrant) in the archaic polis. The more difficult wordplay is meant to describe the more specific relationship between two individuals; their successful deciphering of and appreciation for the wordplay reinforces their position at the top of the social order.

B. Bacchyl. 3.83-94

Comparative evidence from Bacchylides supports the idea that enigmatic speech staged a site of elite dialogue in epinicia. The poetic speaker at the end of the third ode of Bacchylides deploys an elemental priamel, which follows directly after the direct speech of Apollo to Croesus, the conquered dynast who is about to be consumed by the funeral pyre. This elemental priamel is often compared negatively with Pindar’s own more famous composition at the beginning of Olympian 1.⁴² However, I categorize the dialogue staged in these lines as more comparable to that of Olympian 6 and Olympian 2 especially for its direct address to an elite, which frames the passage, as well as the content of the dialogue, which is strictly about the elite use of wealth:

85 “ὅσια δρῶν εὐφραϊνε θυμόν: τοῦτο γὰρ
κερδέων ὑπέρτατον.”
φρονέοντι συνετὰ γάρυω: βαθὺς μὲν
αἰθήρ ἀμίαντος: ὕδωρ δὲ πόντου

⁴² See below pp. 166-174. Burnett (1985) 74-76 on this passage generally; also, Wind (1971); Brannan (1973); Carey (1978-1979).

οὐ σάπεται: εὐφροσύνα δ' ὁ χρυσός:
 ἀνδρὶ δ' οὐ θέμις, πολὺν π[αρ]έντα
 γῆρας, θάλειαν αὐτὶς ἀγκομίσσαι
 90 ἦβαν. ἀρετᾶ[ς γε μ]έν οὐ μινύθει
 βροτῶν ἅμα σ[ώμα]τι φέγγος, ἀλλὰ
 Μοῦσά νιν τρ[έφει]. Ἰέρων, σὺ δ' ὄλβου
 κάλλιστ' ἐπεδ[είξ]αο θνατοῖς
 ἄνθεα: (Baccchyl. 3.83-94)

“...Gladden your heart by doing holy things: for this
 is the highest of profits.”
 85 To the one knowing, I speak understandable things. Deep air on the one hand is
 unpolluted. And the water of the sea
 does not decay. And gold is festivity.
 But for a man it is not sanctioned, in bypassing
 grey old age, to approach bloomful youth once more.
 90 The light of mortal excellence does not diminish
 with the body,
 but the Muse nurtures it. And you, Hieron, have received
 the most beautiful blooms of wealth for mortals.

The recommendation of the god (ὅσια δρῶν εὐφραίνει θυμόν: τοῦτο γὰρ κερδέων
 ὑπέρτατον. 83-84) conveys implicit, socially acceptable meaning. Yet once again, Apollo's
 speech requires interpretation: the highest of profits is not a physical profit at all, but rather “holy
 things” (ὅσια 83). These are condensed symbols, unstated forms of behavior worthy of pursuit.
 The epinician festivity itself could be considered one of these “holy things,” as could other works
 of public beneficence. Moreover, the god describes these actions in terms of *kerdeōn*, a term
 which conveys as Kurke argues, not physical wealth or “profits” (disembedded economy) but
 rather the embedded economy of epinician *kudos*.⁴³ Epinician poets sang about wealth and profit
 not because of their own venality, but to encourage elite participation in polis wealth-building
 and to speak of a higher wealth imbued by poetry itself. Such a position has obvious relevance to

⁴³ Kurke (1991) 225-239, though Bacchylides is not discussed; I note the near exact Pindaric parallel of I 1.51
 κέρδος ὕψιστον, which Kurke treats at some length (235-237).

the preceding myth of Croesus, who for all his wealth could not save himself from the vicissitudes of fortune.

The deployment of enigmatic speech by a poet one has hired is itself an example of this embedded economy, since as I explained above, elites possessed enigmatic speech as a prestige object. The elemental sequence, as I understand it, articulates a condensed meaning (κερδέων ὑπέρτατον 84) by a series of statements with the idea of disembedded wealth in mind. The sky is undefiled (unlike κέρδος); the sea does not decay (unlike κέρδος); gold is festivity (and not κέρδος).

Air (αἰθήρ 86) appears first and thus most prominently in the priamel, (recall that in Olympian 1, *aithēr* appears only in the simile describing the prominence of the sun *in the aithēr*). Moreover, the qualities attributed to the air are seemingly not immediately obvious (e.g. βαθύς 85) and contingent upon negation, e.g., “unpolluted” (ἀμίαντος 86; cf. the straightforward and non-described *ariston* of O. 1.1).⁴⁴ The second term, *hudōr*, is here specified as deriving from the sea (πόντου 86) and is also defined in negative terms: either “it does not corrode” or “it does not ferment.”⁴⁵ Thus in contrast with the elemental sequence in Pindar, water is no longer defined in absolute terms, both by its secondary position in the list, and by the specificity of its source (“the ocean”). Indeed, drinking brine was a penalty for failing to satisfy the requirements of enigmatic play.⁴⁶ This phrasing makes it difficult to discern the water-as-poetry metaphor in Bacchylides, which is the favorite interpretation of commentators’ who study the priamel in O. 1 and O. 2.

⁴⁴ What air is *bathus*? Though today we might use a like expression to describe humidity, no similar meaning in Greek exists of which I am aware. Homer uses ἡέρα βαθεῖαν (Il. 12.7) to mean something like “mist.” The phrase αἰθήρ ἀμίαντος appears in Empedocles (100.5) to describe, paradoxically, the fact that even “pure” air has weight when it “pushes” water from a water clock.

⁴⁵ On negation in epinician poetry see Hummel (1993) 306-314.

⁴⁶ Ath. X 459 a-b.

The designation of an elite audience also marks a different kind of transition: from the direct speech of Apollo to that of the epinician narrator.⁴⁷ The speaker's first person reference to his own speech relative to the god's is particularly jarring (here, γάρῳ 85 = "I, who was just speaking in the guise of Apollo, speak understandable things"). Moreover, knowing Apollo's tendency toward speech that requires further interpretation, an ancient audience might expect the god, not the epinician speaker, to deliver the cosmological sequence. But just as in Olympian 6, the poetic speaker takes responsibility for uttering enigmatic speech away from the direct speech of the god of prophecy. Whereas the narrator of Olympian 1 sets up a series of value judgements spoken *in propria persona* and whereas Olympian 3 presents those same value judgments in an abbreviated, subordinated form, Bacchylides 3 uses the speech of a deity to confirm a highest value and then elaborates *in propria persona* a cosmological sequence in support of the divine speech.

C. Hybrid Dialogues: Elite and Literary

1. Olympian 2 and Aesopic Fable

The well-known poetic vaunt of Olympian 2 (i.e. "many arrows in my quiver speak to the *sunetoi*") presents distinctions of audience that are similar to texts such as the Derveni Papyrus.⁴⁸ Indeed, like the *PDerv*, the ode has been interpreted as containing a subtext of Orphic initiation directed at the dynasts of Magna Graecia, who probably were familiar with Orphic ideas and

⁴⁷ Though on the surface this line is similar to the admonition of O. 2.85-86, there is no clear foil group for those who do not understand.

⁴⁸ This similarity has recently been noticed by Hunter (2014), 265-266, who notes a further set of similarities between these passages and Eur. *Hipp.* 986-991.

practices.⁴⁹ However, a close reading reveals that the Pindaric speaker stages a dialogue that incorporates fabular material as a locus of elite discourse. This means that the text speaks to the social structures at Acragas and simultaneously to the literary tradition of fable-telling; thus I understand the dialogue in this ode to be “hybrid,” driven by a conversation with both elite interests and popular literary tradition.

As Chapter 1 demonstrated, the staging of a literary dialogue in an epinician ode ties the speaker’s literary competition to athletic victory. This does not rule out the possibility of an “initiatory” subtext *per se*; it does complicate such an analysis, however, since the staging of a competition, whether literary or archaic, seems several steps removed from the solemnity of initiation. Moreover, the passage at the end of Olympian 2 has been taken as representative for establishing the Pindaric speaker’s identity throughout the epinician corpus and is especially important in the reception of Pindar by later poets, ancient and modern as “incomprehensible.”⁵⁰ In contrast, this chapter argues that the staging of dialogue at the end of Olympian 2 aims toward comprehensibility, insofar as it facilitates mutual understanding between segments of society in Acragas.

πολλά μοι ὑπ’ ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη
 ἔνδον ἐντι φαρέτρας
 85 φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμηνέων
 χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ· μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι
 παγγλωσσία, κόρακες ὥς, ἄκραντα γαρύετον
 Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον.
 ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ, τίνα βάλλομεν
 90 ἐκ μαλθακᾶς αὐτε φρενὸς εὐκλέας ὅϊστοὺς ἰέντες;

Many to me are the swift shots beneath my arm
 inside the quiver,

⁴⁹ See Lloyd-Jones (1990) 80-109 on elements of mystery religions in Pindar; Bowra (1964) 122 on this passage.

⁵⁰ Hamilton (2003) 3-4 on “dark filter theory”; on the passage’s immense popularity in antiquity and its association with Pindar’s poetry as a whole, see Most (1986) 304-5, Eust. *Prooem. ad Pind.* 3, and the comment of Aristarchus (Σ ad O. 2.152c).

85 pronouncing unto those who understand: They [swift shots] absolutely
 crave transmitters. *Sophos* is he who knows many things by nature; those who learn are
 greedy with prattle, just as crows chatter
 in comparison with the mighty divine bird of Zeus.
 Now hold up to the target, yes, my heart, the bow: whom do we target
 90 from our supple mind, releasing renowned darts?

The question of to whom or what groups does the speaker address his shots has long occasioned critical investigation. I have chosen to translate lines 85-86 (ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμηνέων χατίζει) in contrast with what was for centuries the preferred rendering, that is, the distinction between two kinds of audiences (e.g., “for the majority of people there is a need of interpreters”).⁵¹ Instead I follow Glenn Most, whose reading is based on fifth-century word usage.⁵² Citing parallels from Aeschylus and elsewhere, he reads ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν (85) not as “for the majority” but as an emphatic adverbial phrase, i.e., “entirely/altogether,” modifying the verb χατίζει (86: “crave”), whose subject (“swift shots”) carries over from the previous clause. Thus, the sense becomes: “swift shots absolutely demand *hermaneis*.” Likewise, Most disputes that the *hermaneis* in this passage would have been understood by a fifth century audience as “exegetes” or “interpreters” as the term was usually understood. By contrast, according to the literary record, the *hermaneus* in the archaic period played the role of an intermediary between humans and gods or between humans who spoke different languages. Rather than denote an individual, internalized cognitive act such as interpretation, the term actually describes the communally-minded cognitive act of a “translator” or “transmitter.” Thus the *hermaneus* stages a dialogue, either between gods and humans, not unlike the ainigma of Nemean 6 discussed last chapter, or between two groups of humans, such as in Olympian 6.

⁵¹ E.g., Sandys (1915): “but for the crowd they need interpreters...”

⁵² Most (1986).

In this way, the Pindaric speaker encourages here the dissemination of the content of the epincian ode through the agency of various *hermeneis*. To understand lines 85-86 as a call to cognitive participation and verbal response for the wider community aligns the text with the literary tradition of enigmatic competition. In these texts, the response of a broader public is often noted, even though the contest is always organized and judged by an elite, for example, King Paneides in the *Contest* (with Homer's popularity), Dionysus in the *Frogs* (with Euripides' popularity), Alexander as judge of the *gymnosophoi*, the exception that proves the pattern is Aristophanes' *Knights* where the Athenian Demos judges Cleon and the Sausage-Seller.

Given the preceding discussion of signposting and audience, it is necessary to consider some possibilities of what the content which must be transmitted actually is in more specific terms than "encomium" or "praise belongs to the victor." Why does the text model itself as enigmatic here, staging a dialogue between certain individuals who know by nature and those who learn? Barkhuizen follows van Leuwen in asserting an abundance of wordplays in Olympian 2.⁵³ In this reading, the speaker suppresses meaning through the use of homonyms and paronomasia related to the here and now of performance. While recognizing that wordplay does require cognitive ability and as I have previously discussed, is often constitutive of enigmatic speech, I am not convinced about the plausibility of the majority of what Barkhuizen sees as wordplay in this ode. I discuss this further in the Appendix.

Likewise, Calvert Watkins proposes that these lines signal the presence of a wordplay at the end of the ode.⁵⁴ Thus *korakes hōs akranta garuēton* (87: "they chatter in vain like a pair of crows") primes the audience for *Akraganti tanusais* (91: "stretching (the bow) at Akragas"). This verbal play supposedly recapitulates that of the anagram at the in the second line: *tina theon, tin'*

⁵³ Barkhuizen (1975) 17-20, 25-29, 31-35, 91-92; van Leuwen (1964); on these wordplays, see Appendix.

⁵⁴ Watkins (1995) 189-190, following Lloyd-Jones (1985). The first play is also noted by Barkhuizen (1975) 28-29.

hērōa, tina d' andra keladēsomen (2: “What god, what hero, and what man shall we celebrate?”).

The play, which distributes the name of the victor across all three classes of praise recipients, represents a very high form of praise indeed. Watkins’ characteristically rich comparanda from the Rig Veda and Avestan texts are impressive and demonstrate the traditionality of wordplay as an Indo-European poetic technique.⁵⁵

Another potential wordplay is discussed by John Hamilton, who notes the tautometric responsion of “Time father of all” (χρονός ὁ πάντων πατήρ 16) with “husband of Rhea, holder of the utmost throne of all” (πόσις ὁ πάντων Ῥέας ὑπέρτατον ἐχούσας θρόνον 77) just a few lines before the poetic vaunt.⁵⁶ The latter appellation designates Kronos and thus, according to the theory of responsion, plays on his name with the word *chronos* in the same metrical position sixty lines earlier in the ode. Taxonomically, this kind of wordplay would qualify as suppression, where the target for wordplay is withheld by means of a circumlocution in the phrase “the spouse of Rhea.”

Of course, the fact that there are sixty lines between these terms and that one is suppressed make it unlikely that a performance audience would have appreciated such play. And there is the question of what the play means, since it is not related to the here and now of the occasion. Hamilton suggests an allegory, arguing that the *chronos* /*Kronos* pun signifies that by banishing his father, Zeus has banished *chronos* also, at least insofar as “temporality is suspended” within the islands of the blessed, which are referenced in the ode’s myth. Overall, while I find the responsion compelling enough and such *Kronos/chronos* wordplay is evident elsewhere in Greek literature, there is nothing in the immediate context to signal it here, and on

⁵⁵ Watkins (1995) 179-193.

⁵⁶ Hamilton (2003) 195-198.

the weight of standard Pindaric usage, Hamilton is wrong to assert that the syntax here is contorted (and thus that such distortion would signal wordplay).⁵⁷

Instead of these subtexts of wordplay, I note that the text stages two dialogues simultaneously. The first designates an elite group, the *sunetoi* by way of a comparison to unnamed adversaries, figuring them as birds. In itself, such competitive self-definition at the end of an ode is not unusual in Pindar (cf. the end of Nemean 7), and the mention of adversaries elsewhere in epinician can constitute an imitation of the athletic contest itself.⁵⁸ But I suggest that this enigmatic self-fashioning is particularly pointed at the end of Olympian 2 because of how it draws on enigmatic material, specifically fable (αἶνος), and thus shows the speaker carrying out his craving for *hermaneis* by becoming one himself.⁵⁹

The verb “I shoot” (βάλλομεν 89) is here used to describe a cognitive activity in a way that recalls Olympian 1, where *sophoi* – presumably the elites at Hieron’s court – are said to *ballein* poetic speech around the table, perhaps even the enigmatic “what is best” question found in that poem’s famous opening. That there is in the present ode a participatory, even competitive sense to the word is evidenced in the archery metaphor made by the speaker (89-90). The bow and target imagery is favored by enigmatic speakers in cases where their meaning is not clear and when they are in dialogue with a notional interlocutor.⁶⁰ It is also true that the image of the

⁵⁷ On Kronos wordplay in Pindar, see Barkhuizen (1975) 28-29; elsewhere, e.g., Pl. *Crat.* 402a and even earlier, Pherecydes D-K 1 (= Diog. Laert I.119), with the discussion of Kirk and Raven (1957) 54-56; on the apparently Proto-Indo-European conventionality of this naming construction, see Watkins (2002).

⁵⁸ e.g., I 4.45-48

⁵⁹ Here I depart from Most (1986) 315-316, who understands a reference to divinatory practice in the mention of birds. As I discuss in the Introduction (pp. 9-17), however, the Pindaric text normally represents divine interpretation in marked contrast with enigmatic speech and its interpretation.

⁶⁰ Aesch. Ag. 1187 ἤμαρτον, ἢ θηρῶ τι τοξότης τις ὧς; (“Have I missed the mark, or do I slay it like some archer?”) Cassandra has here just claimed to have spoken ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων (1183); also, the Hellenistic epigraph γρῖφος: Antipater 32 G-P = AP 7.427.9-10: δοκέω δὲ ποτὶ σκοπὸν ἰθὺν ἐλάσσειν/ ἰὸν Κρηταιεὺς ὧς τις οἰστοβόλος (“But I think I shoot an arrow straight at the target, like some Cretan archer.”) On that “riddle poem” see Gutzwiller (1998) 270f.

bowshot was considered a unity of opposites by Heraclitus, as it relies upon force applied in a direction opposite its target.⁶¹ The question becomes, as with all stagings of dialogues, one of understanding the specifics: at whom and on whose behalf is the speaker shooting his bow?

With the simile “just like jackdaws greedy with prattle” (λάβροι παγγλωσσία, κόρακες ὥς 86-87) the speaker sets himself and his victor in dialogue with certain adversarial speakers, those not possessed of *phua*, who are inferior to the speaker both by the kind and by the quantity of speech they produce. The negative-valences of the adjective *labroi* call attention to an inequity or impropriety in the economy of encomiastic speech, whereas the divide between those who learn and those who know speaks to the status of the speakers.⁶² At the same time, the greediness assigned to these speakers mirrors the previous craving of the poetic speaker’s speech for announcers: the *labroi*, too, can be transmitters of encomiastic content.

A favorite interpretation of the nineteenth century (itself a tweak of a scholiast’s reading) was to understand this sorry flock as an allegorical reference to the Sicilian rhetoricians Korax and Tisias, who were possibly in residence at Theron’s court during the 470s.⁶³ Thus the speaker tells the fable on behalf of the poet Pindar about his competitors in the court of Hieron. But even if we were to accept the bold allusion to historical persons, it is not clear what is to be gained for a performance audience, much less the victory celebration, and the supposed contrast made between rhetoric’s loquacity and poetry’s brevity does not necessarily ring true.

With the mention of birds, their speech and value judgments, there may be another, more immediate and “popular” frame of reference at play: Aesopic fable. As Nagy has demonstrated,

⁶¹ Kahn 78 (= D-K 51), discussion at Kahn (1979) 198-202.

⁶² See LSJ λάβρος, Aesch. *Pr.* 1022, where it is applied to the eagle;

⁶³ Verrall (1880) 128f; By contrast, Σ O. 2.154c, 157a-b, 158a-d present Bacchylides and Simonides as the true targets of criticism.

the fable (αἶνος) is certainly part of the enigmatic speaker's repertoire, and the competitive themes of fabular utterances as well as competition surrounding interpretation has long been recognized.⁶⁴ Moreover, the figure of Aesop was remembered in the biographical tradition as a competitor in regards to *sophia*, revealing his prowess through the interpretation of enigmatic speech or found objects.⁶⁵ And there is at least some evidence that epinicia deployed recognizable fables.⁶⁶ The appropriation of fabular material constitutes a literary dialogue separate from an elite dialogue.

Of course, there are several issues which make the idea of cross-fertilization with a *specific* Aesopic fable in Olympian 2 rather tenuous – namely, the fact that fables as we have them were collected from a wide range of periods, most of them much later than the fifth century BCE.⁶⁷ At the same time, Aesop came into his own as an object of popular curiosity in the fifth century, as is evidenced by his quotation and parody in many sources and his presence on vases.⁶⁸

Because fables often represent elite discourse and competition and moreover, because the following fable describes conflict between kinds of individuals in a way very similar to the end of Olympian 2, we can hypothesize (with certain reservations) that the incorporation of fabular content develops the Pindaric speaker's role as a competitive *ainigmatōdēs*. It also fulfills his call for *hermaneis*, since these lines use a popular form to convey aristocratic ideology. As a point of comparison, I offer the following fable, which compares a divine bird with a lesser bird and reports that the hierarchy of form between them is unchangeable.

⁶⁴ Nagy (1990) 426-428 argues that the *ainos* speaks to conflict and strife between social groups.

⁶⁵ On Aesop's role as a competitor in the *sophia* tradition, see Kurke (2011) 125-158.

⁶⁶ E.g., Simon. PMG 508, 514; below, pp. 129-132.

⁶⁷ On chronology of the Aesop tradition see Kurke (2011) 7n15; 13-22.

⁶⁸ Kurke (2011) 225-229.

Μῦθος ὁ κόρακος παραινῶν τῇ φύσει πειθαρχεῖν.

Ἐωρακῶς τὸν κύκνον ὁ κόραξ ἐζήλου τοῦ χρώματος· οἰηθεὶς δὲ εἶναι τοιοῦτον οἷς ἀπελούετο, τοὺς βωμοὺς ἐκλιπὼν ὅθεν ἐτρέφετο, λίμναις καὶ ποταμοῖς ἐνδιέτριβεν. καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα φαιδρύνων οὐκ ἤμειβεν, τροφῆς δὲ ἀπορῶν διεφθείρετο.

Φύσιν οὐκ οἶδε μεταβάλλειν ἡ δίαίτα. (Perry 398, Aphth. 40, ed. Sb.)

A fable of a crow advises one to obey authority in respect to *phusis*.

After a crow saw a swan it was jealous of its color. And having supposed that it [color] was the kind of thing that was washed off by them, it abandoned the altars where it was raised, and spent time in rivers and lakes. And by washing its body it did not change, and being without a means of sustenance it perished.

One's way of life cannot change one's *phusis*.

First, there is the rather obvious similarity between the creatures involved in this passage and in Olympian 2. The swan of the fable is a “divine bird of Zeus” (θεῖος ὄρνις Δίος). This does not mean that a swan rather than an eagle is referred to in Olympian 2. As Zeus is elsewhere in Pindar and other archaic literature overwhelmingly associated with the eagle, it would be difficult to read the end of Olympian 2 as a veiled reference to a swan, much less this specific Aesopic swan.⁶⁹

The main point of convergence lies in the moral of the fable: one cannot change one's *phusis*. This is indeed close in meaning to the gnome of Olympian 2, that one cannot change one's *phua* through learning (O2. 86-88). Perhaps, one might object, Pindaric *phua* “nobility/stature/genius,” which speaks to outer form and inner nature, cannot be equated with *phusis*, a term which usually denotes only “origin” or “inner nature.”⁷⁰ Yet the fable is careful to describe *phusis* in physical terms: the crow wants to change its *sōma*, emphasizing its outer

⁶⁹ On the eagle as the divine bird of Zeus in Pindar, see P. 1.6, P. 4.4, I. 6.50.

⁷⁰ See LSJ I for “origin” and II for “nature” or “constitution,” though note at Pindar N. 6.5 φύσιν = “outward appearance.”

appearance (τοῦ χρώματος). Moreover, there is an obvious hierarchy of physical form between the swan and the crow, just as exists between the crow and the divine bird of Zeus in Olympian 2.

In considering the possibility of allusion to fabular material here, two larger interpretive questions arise: one with regard to the immediate context of the ode and another concerning audience reception. First, the fable's moral, which names physical form as immutable, stands in stark contrast with the other physical transformations previously referenced at the end of Olympian 2. The lines preceding the poetic vaunt refer to two beings who were associated with birds after death: Cygnus (Κύκνον 82), whose name means "swan" and who was traditionally transformed into one, and Memnon (Ἀοῦς τε παῖδ' Αἰθιοπα 83) who by popular tradition was commemorated annually by hostile flocks of migrating birds who bore his name.⁷¹ Perhaps, then, these are the heroic, divinely mediated exceptions that prove the rule of the divinely mediated and largely static *phua* presented by the fabular gnome which follows about the impossibility of changing one's *phua*. Cygnus and Memnon changed their *phua*, true, but it is not for humans to decide such things. An appreciation for the Pindaric speaker's mastery over enigmatic discourse thus aligns with and furthers a traditional aim of Pindaric criticism, which is the decipherment of unity in the sequence of the speaker's thought.

In sum, Olympian 2 deploys enigmatic speech as a site of elite dialogue, addressing the *sunetoi* to represent strictly elite interests but staging this dialogue to a broader community through the use of fabular material that confirms the prevailing social hierarchy. As with the

⁷¹ O. 2 81-83: ὃς Ἑκτορ' ἔσφαλε, Τροίας / ἄμαχον ἀστραβῇ κίονα, Κύκνον τε θανάτῳ πόρεν, / Ἀοῦς τε παῖδ' Αἰθιοπα ([Achilles] who felled Hector, irresistible, upright column and dispatched to death Kuknos and the Ethiopian child of Dawn." For Kuknos' metamorphosis, see Ovid *Met.* 12.71-145; For Memnon and the myth of the Memnonides see Ovid *Met.* 13.576-622, Paus. 10.2, and also Ael. 5.1

various wordplays in Olympian 6, the epinician speaker here performs here a synthesis of enigmatic speakers, a single identity who can project objects of interpretation for multiple audiences, a dynamic which is in keeping with the ethical advice of the Pindaric speaker elsewhere, that is, to be “like the cuttlefish.”⁷² Of course, even if such a voice does speak to multiple segments of society, his own interests will likely remain ensconced within the hierarchy that commissioned the performance. From the perspective of a victor, this kind of multifacetedness would suit the interests of a ruler like Theron, that is, for the text of the performance to engage with several levels of his populace simultaneously, just as the victory celebration itself so engaged. Thus by taking up such a mantle, the Pindaric speaker pays the ultimate poetic honor to his patron.

2. Pythian 9 and the Riddling Contest

Another case where enigmatic speech stages elite discourse, I argue, arises in Pythian 9, where Apollo, smitten with Cyrene, asks the centaur Chiron about what course of action he should take in order to act upon his lust. Thus we might expect as a response a declamation of some kind drawing on traditional authority, in keeping with texts such as the *Precepts of Chiron*, which associated the centaur with Hesiodic truth-telling. The wizened beast, however, considers Apollo’s question a trick and proceeds to answer by asserting his interlocutor’s divine authority over knowledge about the future. As I will show, this initial repartee between two *sophoi* is mirrored by the speaker’s own dialogue, which entails a designation of *sophoi* and the performance of the competitive road trope. The speaker’s virtuosic performance sets as exemplary the literary tradition of riddling competition and sets the epinician victor and the

⁷² S-M fr. 179; on similar advice in Theognis see above pp. 71-74; or perhaps “walk like a wolf” (P.2.84).

performance audience in dialogue with legendary interlocutors. First, the competitive utterances of the legendary *sophoi*:

- “ὅσια κλυτὰν χέρα οἱ προσενεγκεῖν,
ἦ ῥα; καὶ ἐκ λεγέων κεῖραι μελιηδέα ποίαν;”
τὸν δὲ Κένταυρος ζαμενής, ἀγανᾶ χλαρὸν γελάσσαις ὀφρύϊ, μῆτιν ἔαν
εὐθὺς ἀμείβετο: ‘κρυπταὶ κλαῖδες ἐντὶ σοφᾶς Πειθοῦς ἱερᾶν φιλοτάτων,
40 Φοῖβε, καὶ ἐν τε θεοῖς τοῦτο κἀνθρώποις ὁμῶς
αἰδέοντ’, ἀμφανδὸν ἀδείας τυχεῖν τὸ πρῶτον εὐνᾶς.
καὶ γὰρ σέ, τὸν οὐ θεμιτὸν ψεύδει θιγεῖν,
ἔτραπε μείλιχος ὀργὰ παρφάμεν τοῦτον λόγον. κούρας δ’ ὀπόθεν γενεὰν
ἐξερωτᾷς, ὦ ἄνα; κύριον ὃς πάντων τέλος
45 οἶσθα καὶ πάσας κελεύθους:
ὅσσα τε χθὼν ἥρινά φύλλ’ ἀναπέμπει, χῶπόσαι
ἐν θαλάσῃ καὶ ποταμοῖς ψάμαθοι
κύμασιν ῥιπαῖς τ’ ἀνέμων κλονέονται, χῶ τι μέλλει, χῶπόθεν
ἔσσεται, εὖ καθορᾷς.
50 εἰ δὲ χρὴ καὶ παρ σοφὸν ἀντιφερίζαι,
ἐρέω...’ (P. 9.36-51)

- [Apollo asks,] “Is it right to lay my storied hand upon her
and indeed to reap the honey-sweet flower from the bed of love?”
The high-spirited Centaur smiled warmly with his gentle brow and at once answered him
with his advice: “Hidden are the keys to sacred
lovemaking that belong to wise Persuasion,
40 Phoebus, and both gods and humans alike
shy from engaging openly for the first time in sweet love.

- And so your amorous impulse prompted you,
for whom it is not right to touch upon a lie, to make that misleading speech. Do you ask
from where
the girl’s lineage comes, O lord? And yet you know
45 the appointed end of all things and all the paths to them,
and how many leaves the earth puts forth in spring,
and how many grains of sand in the sea and rivers
are beaten by the waves and blasts of wind, and what will happen and whence
it will come—all this you discern clearly.
50 But if I must match wits with one who is wise,
I will speak...” (trans. Race, slightly modified)

Chiron’s assumption, according to the narrator, is that Apollo is not asking a straightforward question and that he instead must demonstrate his own wits (μῆτιν ἔαν 38). This

assumption, I argue, is based on the cultural presupposition that two wise men are accustomed to compete via enigmatic exchanges, as described in the introduction.⁷³ Moreover, the centaur asserts two aspects of the god's authority, his knowledge of "ends and paths" (44-55). Thus the trope of the cognitive road described above in the *Contest* and the *Frogs* establishes here the god's command of enigmatic utterances. Finally, the knowledge of "how many leaves the earth puts forth in spring" (46-47) recapitulates the kind of knowledge that the seer Mopsus vaunts over Calchas in a fragment of the Hesiodic riddling competition, the *Melampodia* (fr. 278 M-W).⁷⁴

Chiron next utters a justification for demonstrating his own cognitive skill (μῆτιν 38), which frames the entire following prophecy as "competitive." The verb of competition (ἀντιφερίζαι 50) appears elsewhere in contexts suggestive of combat between equals.⁷⁵ Of course, Chiron is not the god's equal in any qualifying sense, but perhaps this head-to-head-sparring lends the situation a humorous mood, as some have suggested.⁷⁶

In what follows (52-66), Chiron delivers a prophecy concerning the founding of Cyrene and the birth of Aristaeus. Divine speech and its interpretation, as we have already seen in Olympian 6, is prominent throughout the epinicia as a context for enigmatic speech. But rather than a mimesis of a prophetic utterance or Delphic consultation narrative, the text frames this passage as a contest of *sophoi* whose qualification is a knowledge of paths (44-45). I now argue

⁷³ Though of course, neither Apollo nor the Centaur is a man. On μῆτις as a term of technical skill, see Detienne and Vernant (1991) 57-92.

⁷⁴ Mopsus defeats his foe by reciting the precise number of figs on a tree, a feat which instantly kills Calchas.

⁷⁵ E.g., Hom. *Il.* 21.357; Ar. *Eq.* 813.

⁷⁶ Especially in regards to Chiron's reaction to the god's speech, the adverbial phrase χαρὸν γελάσσαις (38) "laughing warmly," though this a notorious textual crux, q.v. Francis (1972). I follow Turyn and mss. with χαρὸν contra S-M, which reads γλωρὸν "laughing greenly."

that this initial designation of an elite in-group is refracted and amplified in the persona of the enigmatic competitor who stages an elite dialogue in the remainder of the ode.

After the prophecy concerning Aristaeus, the speaker of Pythian 9 draws the audience into his display of cognitive ability, demanding active participation even while sowing the seeds of confusion. This antagonistic strategy of obfuscation is first represented in an ambiguous gnome which concerns the nature of the poetic speaker's role. Shortly after the Aristaeus-Chiron competitive exchange, the epinician speaker issues a call to the *sophoi* in the audience. This call translates the competitive dynamic between mythological figures to those in the performance audience:

ἀρεταὶ δ' αἰεὶ μεγάλαι πολύμυθοι:
βαιὰ δ' ἐν μακροῖσι ποικίλλειν,
ἀκοὰ σοφοῖς: ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὁμοίως
παντὸς ἔχει κορυφάν. (P. 9.76-79)

Great deeds are always replete with stories:
But to embroider little things within the large,
is a tradition/whetstone⁷⁷ for the *sophoi*. And in the same way,
the right moment holds the gist of the whole.

In Olympian 6, the *sophoi* group unambiguously referred to the victor's clan. Here, however, designation of *sophoi* (78) is polysemous, making reference simultaneously to the status of the speaker, the victor, and certain members of the audience.⁷⁸ The speaker uses the designation *sophoi* to speak ambiguously about the microcosm (βαιὰ 77) and the macrocosm (μακροῖσι 77) of the epinician community as a whole. I suggest that each term captures at least

⁷⁷ ἀκόνα is the emendation of Wilamowitz (1922) 264 (cf. O. 6.82), which finds little support from later commentators but which I include because it emphasizes what *sophos* entails: being honed in a craft. Likewise Bernardini (1983) 33-34 emphasizes the aural aspects of the phrase with regards to what a *sophos* audience should hear.

⁷⁸ cf. Hamilton (2003) 306.

two distinct meanings. One possibility is that the *baia*/microcosm is the carefully crafted (as suggested by the verb *ποικίλλειν* 77) poetic composition and performance. It is a brief moment in time (*καιρός* 78), a single part of a much larger whole (*παντός* 79), including the competition and re-performances of the odes at other festivals, and possibly even the wider *kosmos* of time and space. The work of describing the microcosm is *ἀκοά* (78), either the specific “reputation” of the *sophoi*, or perhaps even the “oral tradition.” In this way the *baia* could entail the composition of the ode in relation to literary history and audience expectations, possibly by way of allegory, which was the primary means by which the first literary critics arrived at the concept of microcosm and macrocosm.⁷⁹ The emphasis, then, is on choice: what theme, what words, and what speakers the poet chooses in order to represent the occasion to the world.⁸⁰

Alternatively (and perhaps more intuitively), the *baia* microcosm could mean the victory (objective purpose) and the macrocosm the wider (*μακροῖσι*) expanse of time and space in which the victory resonates by means of the performance. Here *baia* signifies the present, “limited” success of the victor, and thus the poet’s job becomes to contextualize and magnify such success within the much broader register of exempla drawn from myth and familial history; such magnification is at least nominally opposed to selection, even if practically speaking, selection of one theme over another inherently privileges and thus magnifies.⁸¹

To reiterate: these lines propose an ambiguous thought. Either it is the job of the *sophoi* to capture the truth in only a few words or instead, to connect what is at hand to a much larger cosmic structure. Both of these strategies of poetic representation are performed in the *Contest* as

⁷⁹ This method of reading texts, a kind of allegorizing, was very old and appears in Pherecydes (D-K 7 B5), Theaganes (D-K 8 2), Metrodorus, (D-K 61 A4), on which, see the thorough discussion of Struck (2004) 25-33 and Richardson (1980) 69.

⁸⁰ This resembles the view of Norwood (1945) 168-169.

⁸¹ This is the interpretation of Wilamowitz (1922) 263.

well: the former, when Hesiod demands that Homer tell him “in the briefest space what is best of all” (answer: “a sound mind in a manly body”)⁸²; the latter, when Hesiod, asked to deliver his “finest part” of his poetry, dilates on the emergence of the Pleiades and the cycle of the harvest year, which he states is a valid *nomos* (185) for humans who live on the plains, near the sea, or in the valleys.⁸³ Thus Hesiod ties his finest lines not to a specific occasion, but to broad intervals of time and space.

Of course, the Pindaric text never resolves the ambiguity of which poetic strategy is superior, and thus may imply that both are equally valid. As Heraclitus, himself prone to enigmatic speech in competition with other *sophoi*, might say, “the road up and the road down is one and the same.”⁸⁴ To a certain extent, however, these aims, the winnowing and amplifying of subject matter, are contradictory to one another. A poetic speaker cannot expand upon a theme for too long without eventually doing violence to the principle of selection. Or can he? One way to thread this needle would be to maximize the possible number of referents – mythical, topographical, and grammatical – in every syllable of speech. Such a manner of speaking fashions an enigmatic speaker akin to the referent-rich speech of the Homer and Hesiod personae in their *Contest* and demands the cognitive work of an interlocutor to correct and complete the meaning of one’s speech. It is precisely this stratagem that the speaker next adopts.

In what immediately follows this gnome, the speaker of Pythian 9 demonstrates several different ways that isolated, succinct descriptions are constitutive of a much larger mythic history.⁸⁵ These parts signify the whole, and yet the cognitive path that must be traveled by

⁸² Trans. Evelyn-White (1964) *Certamen* 75-76: Ἐν δ’ ἐλαχίστῳ ἄριστον ἔχεις ὃ τι φύεται εἰπεῖν; Ὡς μὲν ἐμῇ γνῶμῃ, φρένες ἐσθλαὶ σώμασιν ἀνδρῶν.

⁸³ *WD* 383-392; *Certamen* 180-189.

⁸⁴ fr. CIII Kahn (= D-K 60), discussed at Kahn (1979) 240-241.

⁸⁵ Similarly, Hubbard (1991) 32-33.

sophoi listeners and the speaker himself in order to assemble the whole is not straightforward and finally stresses the microcosm and the macrocosm in unison with one another through the proliferation of referential speech in a few short lines:

- 80 ἔγνον ποτὲ καὶ Ἰόλαον
οὐκ ἀτιμάσαντά νιν ἐπτάπυλοι Θῆβαι· τόν, Εὐρυσθέης ἐπεὶ κεφαλὰν
ἔπραθε φασγάνου ἀκμᾶ, κρύψαν ἔνερθ' ὑπὸ γᾶν διφρηλάτα Ἀμφιτρύωνος
σάματι, πατροπάτωρ ἔνθα οἱ Σπαρτῶν ξένος
κεῖτο, λευκίπποισι Καδμείων μετοικήσας ἀγνιᾶς.
τέκε οἱ καὶ Ζηνὶ μιγεῖσα δαΐφρων
85 ἐν μόναις ὠδῖσιν Ἀλκμήνα
διδύμων κρατησίμαχον σθένης υἱῶν.
κωφὸς ἀνὴρ τις, ὃς Ἡρακλεῖ στόμα μὴ περιβάλλει,
μηδὲ Διρκαίων ὕδάτων ἀεὶ μέμνεται, τὰ νιν θρέψαντο καὶ Ἰφικλέα (P. 9.79-88)

- 80 Once Seven-Gated Thebes recognized
that Iolaus did not dishonor him/it: This one [Iolaus], after he removed the head
of Eurystheus with the edge of his sword, they concealed beneath the earth
in the tomb of the charioteer Amphitryon,
where his grandfather, guest friend to the Spartoi,
lay after having left the white-horsed boulevards of the Kadmeans.
After having the consort of him and Zeus did nimble-witted
85 Alcmene bear in a single birthing
a strong-fighting brood of double sons.
Dim is the man who does not cast his mouth 'round the name "Heracles,"
nor has he ever known the waters of Dirce, the ones which nourished this man and
Iphicles.

The passage is ambiguous by way of antecedent confusion, specifically with regards to the pronoun *nin* (80). This could refer to Telesicrates, Heracles, or even to the abstract concept *kairos* (78) in the previous line.⁸⁶ The audience is left to puzzle out what contextual information might clarify the ambiguity and, as this line transitions from one particular form of speech (the

⁸⁶ Wilamowitz (1922) 263f, Gildersleeve (1885) 344, Gentili (1988) 280-282 among others prefer *καιρός*. Péron (1976) 64-65, following Bundy (1962) 17 n42, states the case most persuasively for a reference to the victor here. I cannot find any attempt to read "Heracles," but logically this seems to me better than the abstract *καιρός*, though still perhaps inferior to Telesicrates himself, which is acknowledged by two scholia (Σ P. 9.154a-b). Conflation of Heracles and the victor is certainly flattering, as I discuss below.

gnome) to another, characterize the speech as a whole. Is this a reference to Telesicrates' recent success at the Iolaia (local Theban games) and thus a victory catalogue, or the beginning of a myth about Iolaos?⁸⁷ Adding to the confusion is that the adverb *pote* more commonly in Pindar introduces myths than victory catalogues;⁸⁸ thus an epinician audience might reasonably expect *nin* (80) to have an heroic antecedent at this point. As Farnell remarks, in the absence of a clear referent, the pronoun *nin* is a "mere shadow-word."⁸⁹ This sort of narrative disjunct, in echoing the ambiguous language of the *Contest* speakers which shifts or is negated line by line, presents the speaker as enigmatic.⁹⁰

The next clause elaborates the preceding gnome (ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ... κορυφάν 78-79) in a playful way. Playful, because the "dismemberment" of time operative in the original gnome is now translated into a number of dismemberments: most obviously, the decapitation of Eurystheus, but also the separation in time of the king's wrongdoing from Iolaus' eventual vengeance⁹¹; the gulf between the king's reputation in life and his propitious corpse, apparently a token of local pride⁹²; the mingling of his bones with another hero's (81-82); the splitting of a "single birth" between two sons (85-86), and the grammatical dismemberment of pronoun and antecedent pairs, which occurs, somewhat awkwardly in line 80 (viv...τόν) and 88 (viv καὶ Ἰφικλέα, which by virtue of being adjacent to Heracles' mortal brother, refers most strongly to him, but also to the victor, who is a recipient of Pindar's poetry). In this way, the narration of the myth, which by its syntax and repetition enacts dismemberment or diffusion of small storylines

⁸⁷ Péron (1976) 61 with further references (n6).

⁸⁸ Hummel (1993) 336-337; Nierhaus (1936) 148; also Farnell (1931) 162.

⁸⁹ Farnell (1931) 162.

⁹⁰ See Callisto example above, Introduction p. 6-8.

⁹¹ Several versions of Eurystheus' death are preserved; Pausanias, like Pindar, names Iolaus the murderer (I.44.14; also E *Heracl.* 1026-1044 and Strabo 8.6.19); others prefer Hyllus (Ps. Apollod. *Bibliothēke* 2.8.1; Diod. Sic. 4.57).

⁹² Strabo 8.6.19 puts the tomb in Gargettos, Attica; Pausanias (I.44.10) and Ps.-Ap. 2.8.1 in the Megarid. See Seaford (2009) 224f.

and themes in a very short span of words is a kind of efficient path (as in Olympian 6.22-27, see above). This particular telling of the myth thus aligns with both interpretations of the cosmic gnome of the previous lines (magnification and selection). It speaks to the *sophoi* by enacting the characteristic of Apollo that had been marked out initially by Chiron's playful foray into enigmatic competition, that is, the god's ability to know the paths between all things and forces the listener to make his own cognitive path involving syntax, myth, and meaning (44-45).

The end of the path (and our passage) arrives when the speaker announces that only a simpleton would not respond by forming (and praising) the name "Heracles" when presented with the preceding information (87). Just as a form of *ballō* in Olympian 2 (89) delineates and authenticates an elite in-group capable of understanding difficult speech, the form of *periballō* here does the same here by means of negation. The power to speak lies with those who hold power; being *kōphos* can thus be a marker of low status as well as a physical/cognitive inferiority.⁹³ By using a *-ballein* verb, the speaker solicits an unambiguous authentication of his previously ambiguous statements.⁹⁴ In other words, if only a stupid person would not *periballei* his mouth to the name "Heracles," then it stands to reason that the speaker is in fact making a kind of query by the preceding lines that must be answered or authenticated. I suggest that this query extends not only to the previous unnamed referent "strong-fighting brood of double sons"

⁹³ As discussed by Young (1979) 136f.; see also Hdt. I.47, where the Delphic Oracle, after making an identical claim to Chiron's about knowing the number of sands on the beach, claims to be able to hear the voice of the κωφός, and then speaks enigmatically to Croesus.

⁹⁴ This is the idea that σύμβολον, συμβάλλειν originally had the meaning "to throw together," referring to the joining of matching or broken items in order to authenticate a relationship, status, or claim. On this authenticating function, see further Struck (2004) 78-84 who discusses the range of a -βάλλειν compounds serving this function. Though understood usually in relation to divine speech, this notion of fitting together language suits poetic enigmatic contests particularly well, since it was the task of the contestant to join a specific line to another, and in so doing authenticate his poetic/cognitive bonafides. A TLG proximity search of στόμα and περιβάλλω suggests that Pindar's usage here is unique, that is, the acc. + dat. construction with the meaning "form one's mouth around," i.e., "pronounce." The only other example of the verb referring to a speech act in the fifth century or earlier occurs at Eur. *IT* 788 (ὦ ραιδίους ὄρκοισι περιβαλοῦσά με), in reference to an oath, which demonstrates the authenticating function of -βάλλω verbs.

(86, of which Heracles is certainly one) but also to the antecedent ambiguity in *nin* (80, 88). By virtue of its being singular, this referent offers a superior opportunity for the audience to *periballein* Heracles. Though Telesicrates himself is, philologically speaking, the best solution to the referent of *nin* (80), the speaker's conflation of the *kleos* of hero and victor is a strategy of epinician praise. In Pythian 9 in particular, the situation of Telesicrates has often been thought to be conflated with that of Alexidamus, his heroic ancestor who won a marriage by his athletic prowess.⁹⁵

The final vaunt thus stages the passage as a site of cognitive competition, where the barrier to entry is presented as low ("only a fool would not recognize"), and in this sense the competitive aspect is mitigated, at least on the surface, that is, from the Pindaric speaker's perspective. He composes his discourse above the fray, like a cork floating atop the sea.⁹⁶ As I hope to have shown, however, this disdain ought to be read as an affect of the speaker. Through the proliferation of referential and ambiguous speech, the ignorance of this notional interlocutor is to a certain extent justified by the speaker's strange narrative, and if I am correct, this feeling of ignorance (a cognitive space that demands response) was experienced by at least some in the audience. Of course, the figure of Heracles would have been well known, and especially so to a Theban audience, where this ode was likely performed, but his presence is not explicitly or unambiguously signaled by the antecedent "him/it" (viv 80).⁹⁷

To summarize the staging of enigmatic dialogues in Pythian 9: The speaker introduces a myth with a riddling contest, a dialogue between *sophoi*. The speaker then targets his own speech to the *sophoi* associated with the performance, plays with the idea of dismemberment,

⁹⁵ Carey (1981) 71.

⁹⁶ P 2.80.

⁹⁷ On the audience of Pythian 9 and the site of performance see Péron (1976) 70-71.

solicits through ambiguity a cognitive response from his audience, and reiterates his discourse as one mediated among *sophoi*. Thus by considering the literary model of the riddling contest in connection with this passage, we gain an appreciation for how the Pindaric text deploys enigmatic speech to stage multiple dialogues that work in concert with one another.

A final point is the range of postures covered by the staging of enigmatic speech as a site of elite dialogue, which is not a monolithic designation but offers a diversity of form and function. When enigmatic dialogue stages elite discourse, it designates a group of elites as in relationship with other entities. Such a conclusion contrasts with the work of Gregory Nagy who understands Pindaric *ainos* to speak only to a small in-group.⁹⁸ Thus we have seen in Olympian 6 that enigmatic dialogue can mediate and negotiate between kinds of elites (kings and *manteis*); in Bacchylides 3 elite dialogue attempts to idealize and regulate elite behavior regarding embedded wealth with relation to the Archaic polis; Olympian 2 stages dialogue to embrace the necessity of elite and non-elite speech as transmitters of epinician victory; and Pythian 9 stages elite dialogue to associate the victory event with legendary local heroes such as Heracles. Once again, we have seen how enigmatic speech in Pindar facilitates rather than obscures such associations. And in the following chapter, I expand the scope of the conversation to include broader, collective interlocutors.

⁹⁸ Nagy (1990) 146-150.

Chapter 3: Enigmatic Speech and Communal Dialogue

Whereas the previous chapter looked at how enigmatic speech addresses elite concerns, the present one considers enigmatic speech as a site of dialogue with the broader epinician community. Another point of the last chapter was that, in a society dominated by elites, elite concerns *are* communal concerns, and thus forms of elite discourse speak simultaneously to a larger community.

But it is also true that within archaic *poleis* communal concerns existed in and of themselves and therefore were represented and addressed in poetic speech without particular reference to elite discourse of wealth, seercraft, etc. Moreover, enigmatic speech, including riddles, fables, and other forms, in addition to being the private property of tyrants were always considered popular forms, scribbled as graffiti on grave markers, enjoyed by children, and traded by enslaved peoples. Riddling poetic personae such as that of Aesop and Cleoboulina were represented as non-elite “others”; so too does the Pindaric speaker occasionally step back from his claims to *sophos* status in order to stage a dialogue with an unmarked collective interlocutor.

Readers of Pindar may hesitate at the stipulation of epinician poetry’s engagement with a non-elite audience through the medium of *ainigma* since, generally speaking, the epinician speaker represents himself as an elite who partakes of and benefits from prestige activities including commerce, craftsmanship, and gift-exchange. At the same time, this is only part of the story. As we have already seen, the Pindaric speaker is not a monolithic entity but rather a hybrid of several voices performed by a chorus for a larger community. In this chapter I argue that within epinician, we observe three strands of communal dialogue in the text’s deployment of enigmatic speech, each of which corresponds to either a positive or negative invocation of

communal interpretation. One negative posture sees the speaker downplaying the possibility of divine interpretation, while presenting his own objects of interpretation for the wider non-specialist community to interpret. We observe such a dynamic in Olympian 12 and Nemean 11, odes whose negative attitudes toward divination and *manteia* stand in stark contrast with Olympian 6 of the last chapter. Another negative posture involves the self-abnegation of the cognitive abilities of the speaker, who performs confusion, which invites the audience to partake in collective deliberation over rapidly pronounced enigmatic speech. A third, positive strategy of initiating communal dialogue sees the deployment of enigmatic speech in order to bolster claims to localized communal authority. Thus while the first two invoke this communal dialogue indirectly, it is this final strategy that most explicitly uses enigmatic speech to validate a community of interpreters broader than the “elite discourse” of last chapter.

A. Rejection of Divine Interpretation

1. Olympian 12

As I explained in the Introduction, an expressed pessimism about the reliability of divine, professional, interpretative activity can sometimes embolden a speaker into offering his own enigmatic speech for interpretation.¹ This move characterizes a communal dialogue because it shifts conversation away from professional interpretation or elite discourse and towards a broader notional community.

For example, the speaker of Olympian 12 is deeply concerned with the outcome of future events, but not athletic ones. Indeed, we learn that the victor has already won at three major contests (Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian), quite a feat to record in an eighteen line composition.²

¹ Above, pp. 9-27.

² Though it has not been suggested by any other commentator (or the scholia) the revelation of Ergoteles’ name (“deed-accomplisher”) at the end of this impressive victory catalogue offers what I take to be a fine example of etymologizing. This play would represent another σύμβολον and possibly one reminiscent of divine interpretation,

But the brevity of this shortest of Pindaric odes ought not to make us lose sight of the magnitude of human suffering, uncertainty, and cognitive power on display here. For even in the face of such success, the speaker inveighs against the practice of divine interpretation, claiming that all divine *symbola* are “not trustworthy”:

- 5 αἶ γε μὲν ἀνδρῶν
πόλλ' ἄνω, τὰ δ' αὖ κάτω ψεύδη μεταμῶνια τάμνοισαι κυλίνδοντ' ἐλπίδες:
σύμβολον δ' οὐ πώ τις ἐπιχθονίων
πιστὸν ἀμφὶ πράξιος ἐσσομένης εὔρεν θεόθεν:
τῶν δὲ μελλόντων τετύφλωνται φραδαί.
10 πολλὰ δ' ἀνθρώποις παρὰ γνώμαν ἔπεσεν,
ἔμπαλιν μὲν τέρψιος, οἱ δ' ἀνιαραῖς
ἀντικύρσαντες ζάλαις ἐσλὸν βαθὺ πῆματος ἐν μικρῷ πεδάμειψαν χρόνῳ. (O. 12.5-12)

- 5 The expectations of men
often roll upwards and then back down, shredding idle fancies.
No earthdweller has in any way discovered a
trustworthy *symbolon* of future action from heaven.
To future things the mind is blind.
10 Many things befall humans contrary to expectation
sometimes he rejoices, others having encountered troubles exchange woe for abiding
prosperity in a short span.

The claim made here is specific to the logic of the twelfth Olympian ode, which reflects on the nature of chance (the addressee of the prooimion is Tuche) generally.³ But alongside this general reflection there is also a particular pessimism about the abundance of signs (πολλά 6) in a small period of time (ἐν μικρῷ πεδάμειψαν χρόνῳ 12). This is a subtle move that points, I think, to conditions outside the strict here and now of the performance (as does the catalog of victories, suggesting that this was not a proper “Olympian” ode, as Barrett argues.⁴) The speaker sees signs in “all of life,” just as they were in death in Nemean 7. The interpretive odds are stacked against anyone who intends to decipher such *symbola*, which are specified as coming

as the meaning of names were on occasion even used by experts in a form of divination (kledonomanancy). See Perradotto (1969) for discussion and examples.

³ See Struck (2004) 93f.

⁴ Barrett (1973).

“from heaven.” Nevertheless, the rest of the poem interprets the present occasion in terms of the past and uses a *symbolon* in the form of a fabular metaphor to do so.

First, the speaker offers the figure of the “fighting cock at home” to describe the victor, a figure which, with its accompanying gnome, very well may derive from an *ainos*.⁵ Thus even while asserting the non-reliability of “heaven-sent” (θεόθεν 8) symbols, the speaker successfully delivers the audience his own *symbolon*, which takes the form of a popular, readily assessable figure around which to understand the outcome of the victor’s turbulent life:

15 υἱὲ Φιλάνορος, ἥτοι καὶ τεά κεν,
 ἐνδομάχας ἅτ’ ἀλέκτωρ, συγγόνῳ παρ’ ἐστίᾳ
 ἀκλεῆς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε ποδῶν,
 εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνειρα Κνωσίας ἄμερσε πάτρας. (O.12.13-16)

15 Son of Philanor, surely, just like
 the rooster fighting at home, before an ancestral hearth
 would the honor of your feet have sloughed off⁶ without *kleos*
 had not the man-killer, civil strife bereaved you of your fatherland, Knossos.

I said that the rooster figure describes the victor, but a closer look at the syntax shows that it actually describes his “honor” (τεά...τιμὰ 13, 15) and that the hyperbaton of this noun-adjective pair frames the entire figure. In my judgment, the syntax leaves the door open for a subjective (poet-centered) reading of the figure. That is to say, had there not been stasis at Knossos, not only would Ergoteles not have won at Olympia, but he would have remained *akleēs*, unsung, or without the services of the poet and the epinician performance. Honor (τιμὰ 15) is mediated by

⁵ Silk (2007) 188-189 seems to acknowledge that these lines are proverbial, but professes aporia on particularly relevant fables, preferring instead the image at Aesch. Ag. 1671. However, two Aesopic fables (Perry 23, 252) use the figure of a rooster in a way that is similar to the context of the ode (more than Aesch.). The one (23) moralizes about civil strife and the other, (252) considers how to best respond to a threat (by leaning on one’s friends). The former is particularly apt, since it designates specifically the “rooster at home” and the moral reads: “Wise men bear the injustices of their neighbors lightly, when they notice their neighbors not refraining from (fighting with) each other.” This well suits the stasis on Crete background referenced in line 16 and supported by the scholiasts (Σ O. 12 inscr. a-b).

⁶ I prefer this image of dead skin for a runner victor, though the verb literally refers to the loss of tree foliage.

poet and victor, just as much as the image of the rooster. (In Bacchylides, for example, the epinician speaker calls himself a “rooster of the Muse Urania”!)⁷ Thus, while the speaker disavows the reliability of divine interpretation by mere mortals, he offers a polysemous *symbolon* of his own that looms rather large in this brief ode. The future cannot be known, but past can be known in terms of the present by non-experts, through the use of *symbola*.

2. Nemean 11

The same disavowal of professional interpretation couple with the deployment of enigmatic speech characterizes Nemean 11, an ode which is exceptional for being written for a non-athlete, Aristagoras, who won a Prytanic election on the island of Tenedos. The speaker first claims that it is “easy to interpret” the descent on both his mother’s and father’s sides.⁸ This may seem like a straightforward enough recitation of ancestry, which is quite common in epinician, but the verb *sumbalein* (συμβαλεῖν 33) implies the gathering of signs and cognitive activity; particularly, the signs of happenstance one meets upon the road.⁹

Thus the speaker of Nemean 11 constructs his discourse of praise upon the successful interpretation of signs, and then suggests that the laudandus himself or perhaps the accomplishment of the laudandus embodies an interpretable sign. As in Olympian 12 (see n. 2 above), the speaker offers a True Name fitting for this non-athletic laudandus, whose name becomes a site of communal dialogue:

ἐν λόγοις δ’ ἀστῶν ἀγαθοῖσι νιν αἰνεῖσθαι χρεών,
καὶ μελιγδούποισι δαιδαλθέντα μελιζέμεν ἀοιδαῖς. (N.12.17-18)

⁷ Bacchyl. 4.8

⁸ v. 33-34: συμβαλεῖν μὲν εὐμαρὲς ἦν τό τε Πεισάνδρου πάλαι αἶμα’ ἀπὸ Σπάρτας: “Easy it was to interpret the blood of old Peisander of Sparta”

⁹ See Introduction pp. 7-9.

And it is necessary to praise this man in the fine speeches of citizens
and to render in song things that are craftily wrought with sweet-resounding melodies.

The language of craft and skill (δαίδαλθέντα 18) highlights the play on words, which as we saw in the triple crown of Nemean 7 (Ch. 1) is itself understood to be a kind of fine craft. The paronomasia presents a clever *symbolon* for Aristagoras, inverting the more probable active sense of his name (“best at speaking”) into the passive (“well-spoken of”), an etymology which complements his new position as *prytanis*.¹⁰

This careful *symbolon* craftsmanship is especially striking considering what immediately follows at the end of the ode, which is an avowal of the unreliability of divine signs:

καὶ θνατὸν οὕτως ἔθνος ἄγει
μοῖρα. τὸ δ' ἐκ Διὸς ἀνθρώποις σαφὲς οὐχ ἔπεται
τέκμαρ: ἀλλ' ἔμπαν μεγαλανορίαις ἐμβαίνομεν,
45 ἔργα τε πολλὰ μενοινῶντες: (N.12.45)

Thus too does fate drive all mortal brood.
But from Zeus to humans comes no
clear sign. All the same we walk in lordliness,
45 and are eager for many great deeds.

Does the logical sequence of this ode, then, entail a kind of self-abnegation of the speaker's sign-giving ability? Here the word for “sign” is different from *symbolon* in Olympian 12: *tekmar* (44) can in Pindar mean “goal” or “object.”¹¹ But the context points to a meaning very similar to that of *symbolon* in Olympian 12, and we see the generalizing of “all of humanity” (42 θνατὸν οὕτως

¹⁰ Barkhuizen (1975) 86 notes the play and sees a connection to line 14 ἐν τ' ἀέθλοισιν **ἀριστεύων** ἐπέδειξεν βίαν, but this seems to me to be too diffuse to be meaningful. For ἀγορεύω = “speaking in the assembly” see Il.2.788; 23.535

¹¹ See Slater ad τέκμαρ.

ἔθνος/ 43 ἄνθρωποις) as a class of interpreters and the use of Zeus in a general way to represent all gods who give signs. The adjective “clear” (σαφές 44) to describe the sign is slightly different in significance from the “trustworthy” (πιστόν) of Olympian 12; the latter implies the potential for false signs, while the present adjective speaks more perhaps to the deficit of human cognitive capabilities in comparison with the gods. This at least leaves open the possibility of human cognition and interpretation, though it does not explicitly name expert interpreters.

The major difference from Olympian 12 is the ordering of the juxtapositions between optimism and pessimism about human sign interpretation and between expert and non-expert interpreters. Olympian 12 moves from the impossibility of expert interpretation to the performance of non-expert sign-giving and interpretation (the rooster and symbol and the play on the name, “Ergoteles”). Perhaps, then, even though the juxtaposition between divine and human interpretation made in Nemean 11 is similar to Olympian 12, the effect and emphasis is quite different, since Olympian 12 moves from certainty and ease of human interpretation (συμβαλεῖν μὲν εὐμαρὲς ἦν 33-34) to an assertion of the unknowability of divine interpretation (43-44). The dialogue shifts from divine to human interlocutors. In this sense, Olympian 12 develops the concept of divine and human interpretation in the model of the titular character of *Oedipus Rex*, where Oedipus calls into question the reliability of divine interpretation and promotes his own unprofessional *ainigma*-knowledge over divine interpretation. On the other hand, Nemean 11 models sign interpretation on the perspective of the audience of the *OT*, who are aware of the insufficiency of Oedipus’ *ainigma*-based approach to signs.

At other times in the Epinicia, the Pindaric speaker calls attention and practices non-expert interpretation. We have already seen how Nemean 7 uses the image of a “sign of death” which everyone, rich and poor alike, must walk past and (so it is implied, as I argue in Chapter 1)

interpret.¹² Again, the sign is portrayed as a basic condition, a random encounter of every human's existence, rather than the particular skill-intensive field of the expert. All of this leaves open the cognitive space required by enigmatic discourse, so that it is not meant only for the few "skilled" interpreters of divine meaning, but a wider "unskilled" community who engages in the interpretive objects propounded by the epincian speaker of various odes.

B. Communal Authority: Pythian 4

With these minor examples of enigmatic speech as a site communal dialogue established, we can consider more prolonged and complex compositions. As with the previous examples, Pythian 4 juxtaposes expert and non-expert modes of interpretation, but the ode achieves this juxtaposition by showing rather than telling. There are no fewer than six separate instances of expert divine interpretation before the appearance of the *ainigma* at the end of Pythian 4.¹³ The total effect of this proliferation of successful divine interpretation episodes imbues the lengthy narrative with a sense that the conclusion (the successful colonization of Cyrene) is almost unstoppable. When the text arrives at the proper riddle, the non-expert's consideration of the *ainigma* is not an arrogation of expert skills, as in the *Oedipus Tyrannos*; rather it is a fulfillment or even co-option of the efforts of divine interpretation which are represented elsewhere in the ode, since both kinds of interpretation have the same end goal in mind: the community at Cyrene. By switching to the medium of the non-expert, the ode draws the locally-minded performance

¹² Above, pp. 59-61 on N. 7.19-20: "Rich and poor alike cross before the sign of death" ἄφνεός πενιχρός τε θανάτου παρὰ σῆμα (as noted above, I prefer with Wilamowitz to keep the mss. reading)

¹³ Specifically: Medea's prophecy about the Delphic Battus prophecy and the (21-56); the subsequent report of that oracular exchange (59-65); the report of the prophecy given to Pelias about his death (70-75); Pelias' report of the dream and subsequent oracle he received that instructed him to return the spirit of Phrixus (160-165); the divination practiced by Mopsus to aid in navigation (189-191); Jason's prayer to Zeus and the crew's subsequent (correct) interpretation of the omens as positive (193-201)

audience into the reintegration of the exile. Thus both notions of an interpreter – the skilled and the unskilled – work in concert in constructing a broader landscape of interpretive activity for the performance audiences of the ode.

As the previous chapter showed, the Pindaric speaker often deploys the image of the path in a way that claims his cognitive supremacy over other members of the epinician community (and perhaps also other poets) and often paves the way for his performance of enigmatic speech. However, the trope of the road is not only a facet of elite discourse. It can also offer a site of cooperation with the wider community in “leading up to” enigmatic speech. For example, in Pythian 4, the speaker remarks after a very long (actually, the longest in extant epinician poetry) myth that he “knows a short cut” and that he will lead unnamed “others” in regard to his *sophia*:

μακρά μοι νεῖσθαι κατ’ ἁμαξιτόν· ὥρα γὰρ συνάπτει· καί τινα
οἶμον ἴσαμι βραχύν· πολλοῖσι δ’ ἄγῃμαι σοφίας ἐτέροις. (P. 4.247-248)

Great lengths [are] to be traveled on the road by me: For the hour presses,
and I know a certain short path. I will lead many others in *sophia*.

It might be tempting to read this act of “leading” as a statement of competitive poetics so ingrained into the idea of performing an *ainigma*. But a closer look at the context of the ode demonstrates that this declaration really does serve to transition from the mythic past (colonization narrative of Cyrene) to the concerns of the present (likely, the political crisis in the court of Arcesilaus IV, possible re-founding of Euesperides).¹⁴ By stating the currency of competition as *sophia* against unnamed adversaries (ἐτέροις 248) and then immediately afterwards defining this *sophia* as interpretive prowess in regards to enigmatic speech (“wisdom

¹⁴ See below, p. 140 and n26.

of Oedipus” 263), these lines set the stage for the enigmatic utterance of the “buffeted oak,” a riddling image which occurs twelve lines after this declaration.

Given this road trope which signals the presence of enigmatic speech while portraying the relationship between poetic speaker and audience as a cooperative dialogue, it remains to be seen how exactly the enigmatic utterance takes up this dialogue. Once again, the speaker signals

260 ἔνθεν δ' ὕμμι Λατοίδας ἔπορεν Λιβύας πεδίων
σὺν θεῶν τιμαῖς ὀφέλλειν, ἄστν χρυσοθρόνου
διανέμειν θεῖον Κυράνας
ὀρθόβουλον μῆτιν ἐφευρομένοις.
γνῶθι νῦν τὰν Οἰδιπόδα σοφίαν. εἰ γάρ τις ὄζους ὄξυτόμῳ πελέκει
ἐξερεῖψειεν μεγάλας δρυός, αἰσχύνει δέ οἱ θαητὸν εἶδος:
265 καὶ φθινόκαρπος ἐοῖσα διδοῖ ψᾶφον περ' αὐτᾶς,
εἴ ποτε χειμέριον πῦρ ἐξίκηται λοίσθιον.¹⁵
ἢ σὺν ὀρθαῖς κιόνεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν ἐρειδομένα
μόχθον ἄλλοις ἀμφέπει δύστανον ἐν τείχεσιν,
ἐὸν ἐρημώσαισα χώρον.

260 And from there to you Leto's son granted to make splendid the plain of Libya
with the honors for the gods, to rule the divine city
of golden-throned Cyrene,
[you] having discovered the cunning of right counsel.
Know now the skill of Oedipus. For if someone were to hew branches with a sharp-cut
axe off a great oak and befoul its wondrous form,
265 even being fruit-barren it would still deliver an account of itself,
once it reached the winter fire at last,
or if held upright by lordly columns
it provides a brutal labor inside foreign walls,
being stripped of its place.

On the one hand, *sophia* is a term marked in “expert-ness,” as Kurke and Kerferd have both discussed.¹⁶ On the other hand, this is the *sophia* of Oedipus, who, at least in Sophocles’ famous play, as I showed in the Introduction, conceived of his interpretive activity as utterly distinct

¹⁵ λοῖσθος (circumflex on the penult) can mean “wooden beam” and is used of ship lumber (e.g., Eur. *Hel.* 1597), and thus there may be a pun here, though no commentator has noticed it.

¹⁶ Kurke (2011) 98-101 distills the idea σοφία into a kind of skilled craftsmanship. Kerferd’s (1950) lexical survey remains useful.

from *manteia*. Of course, we cannot know if Sophocles' Oedipus was unique in his non-professional identity, but there are several factors here that point in that direction. First, the speaker does not call for sign-based divination, and as commentators have discussed, the rest of the poem effectively provides a key for solving the imagery of the riddle.¹⁷ The performance audience need not have been experts in divination to appreciate or attempt the solution to the *ainigma*, and there is no caution here or elsewhere in the ode about unreliability of signs. Quite the opposite: the very text of the *ainigma* seems to say that a certain sign (the oak) always remains identical in its sign-giving property (δίδοι ψᾶφον περ' αὐτᾶς 265), no matter its position in time (εἴ ποτε... λοίσθιον 267) or space (ἐρημώσαισα χῶρον 269), its interpreter (κίονεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν 267), or even any physical transformation it might have undergone (e.g., φθινόκαρπος ἐοῖσα 265).

We also have some evidence that Oedipus enjoyed a popular reputation in the fifth century as a riddle solver, as illustrated by his depiction solving a riddle on several famous Attic red figure cups, one of which includes the text of the riddle of the sphinx in an abbreviated form and dates to around 470 BCE, slightly before the composition of Pythian 4 (462 BCE).¹⁸ The scene proved quite popular, suggesting that the episode and Oedipus' identity as a riddling interlocutor was already well known by the time of Pythian 4's performance.¹⁹ In gaining

¹⁷ Calame (2003) 44-45 on the use of "vegetal isotopies" and Segal (1986a) 52-71.

¹⁸ Museo Etrusco Gregoriano no. 16541, whose inscription includes the phrase KAI TPI[ΠΙΟΔΟΣ]. There is an even earlier representation of the scene in black figure from 520-510, BCE, though its inscription is disputed. See Katz (2006) 168 n29 for further references on both.

¹⁹ I am indebted to Leslie Kurke for pointing this out to me. See further Kurke (2011) 226-230; 228n62; Moret (1984) 49ff offers twenty three fifth century examples and notes that the scene of the riddling encounter is much more common than any other aspect of the Oedipus myth, which suggests a popular preoccupation with the wisdom tradition and the practice of riddling. It also suggests that the sphinx was a kind of visual shorthand for riddling practices.

notoriety for his skills of interpretation, Oedipus joined a class of “pure” (non-oracular) riddle-solvers in the Greek imagination including certain sages, Aesop, and children.²⁰

The initial lines of this selection cap the lengthy mythological episode of Jason and Medea, tracing the descendants of that expedition to the ruling Euphemid line of Cyrenean kings, referred to here in the second person plural (ὤμμι 259).²¹ By calling attention to their favor with Apollo, the speaker emphasizes the legitimacy of the clan’s rule. The hyperbaton from “you” (ὤμμι 259) to “having discovered” (ἐφευρομένοις 262), which is particularly remarkable for its breach of the strophic boundary,²² situates the addressee-group within a cultural role of those sages who possessed *mētis*.²³ In giving notice that cognitive skill is praiseworthy and that enigmatic speech is about to be performed, the speaker ties the foundation and success of the community to acts of cognition.

For these communal, self-consciously held interests, I have in mind the gifts granted by Apollo recorded in 260 “to make splendid with honors for the gods” (σὺν θεῶν τιμαῖς ὀφέλλειν), perhaps a reference to the great temple of Apollo at Cyrene and the annual celebration of rites at the Karneia. Secondly, the use of a financially-bent word like *ophellein* conveys the communal, economic interests of the region, which was famed for its prosperity.²⁴ This sense is balanced by the more explicit meaning of offering sacrifice or celebrating rites.²⁵ The reference is also heavily condensed in “Plain of Libya” (Λιβύας πεδῖον 259), since, as best we know, Cyrenean

²⁰ Thus Oedipus also passes into Latin literature as a proverbial figure for someone who is skilled at solving riddles; see e.g., Plaut. *Poen.* 1.3.34; Ter. *And.* 1.2.23.

²¹ This “you” could actually include a much broader swath of the audience; It is unknown whether claims to “original” colonial descent would have been distributed broadly throughout various strata of the populace (similar to autochthony at Athens) or rather were restricted to the ruling Euphemids.

²² See Braswell (1988) ad loc.

²³ Detienne and Vernant (1991) 325 n166 on this passage; more generally 57-92.

²⁴ For ὀφέλλειν as economic see e.g. Hes. *Op.* 495; for Pindar’s use of financial metaphors more generally, see Hornblower (2004) 207-235; Kurke (1991) 225-239.

²⁵ See Braswell (1988) ad loc.

rule did not encompass the entirety of such a vast span as what Greeks called “Libya,” though there is compelling evidence that the ruling elite certainly made designs on a new colony in the west at Euesperides.²⁶ Indeed, the choice of such a phrase privileges the local interests (unification/conquest of Libya) over the universal ones (e.g., understanding where Cyrene is on a map.) Finally, the name formula of the city itself is also a condensed symbol, insofar as the designation (ἄστυ χρυσοθρόνου διανέμειν θεῖον Κυράνας ὀρθόβουλον μήτιν 260-261) refers to both the city and the city’s founding nymph.

In this way, the initial lines of this passage presents communal imagery and symbols. This utterance is capped (and summarized) by the cognitive notice “correctly advised cleverness” (ὀρθόβουλον μήτιν 262), which signals the speaker’s imminent deployment of enigmatic speech. At this point in the logical sequence, cognitive ability is “correctly advised” insofar as it serves the interests of the local community on Cyrene. The speaker then shifts his mode of address from plural (ὑμῖν 259) to singular (γνῶθι 263) and performs a dialogue: “Know now the skill of Oedipus...” The speaker now initiates a dialogue with a single interlocutor (γνῶθι 263), whose identity most have understood to be Arcesilaus, the Cyrenean King, who was addressed in the previous triad (250) or else Damophilus, the apparent exile and commissioner of the ode, who is named in the following triad.²⁷ The difference is subtle: either Arcesilaus, like his famous ancestors must enter into dialogue with enigmatic speech at this new juncture for the community and thus the tree is Cyrene; or Damophilus must solve the *ainigma* of his own experience; he is the tree stripped of his place, sent to do “brutal labor” far from home.

²⁶ Chamoux (1952) 160-168, 205 n2; Lattmann (2010) 243; and the testimony of Theotimos *FGrH* 470 F1; for Cyrene’s colonies generally, see Hornblower (2004) 245. For discussion of the recent excavations at Euesperides, see Wilson et al. (2006), who argue (152-155) on the basis of pottery evidence for an early 6th c. date for the colony’s foundation.

²⁷ Braswell (1988) 360-361, with further references.

The *ainigma* articulates the concept of “separateness” over several iterations, similar to Pythian 9 in the previous chapter. The tree’s dismemberment first evokes this separateness (263-264); this idea is stated once more in the adjective “fruit-barren” (φθινόκαρπος 275), which is a hapax (itself another kind of separateness, that of linguistic usage, though of course it may not have been for fifth century audience).²⁸ By this reckoning, separation is infertility, waste, a sickly nature. The idea of separateness develops through the end of the riddle, where it is stated as deprivation or bereavement (ἐρημώσασα 269).

One noteworthy feature of this enigmatic speech is the fact that it relies upon more than one image (the tree reaches the hearth as a fire log; it supports the roof as a lintel; it is called also a doctor). This is not in itself surprising, as many riddles use entire lists of coordinated imagery, symbols, paradoxes in order to suggest or conceal meaning; the idea of a list or sequence is important to enigmatic presentation, as I discuss below.²⁹ A rhetorical approach to epinician poetry would stress the nested, double protasis (266-269) here as a kind of *elaboratio*, which it certainly is.³⁰ Braswell thus remarks that the abundance of examples “is there simply to provide graphic details.” *Qua* enigmatic speech, however, the use of two images or one elaborate image which iterates upon the *same* referent without paradoxical language or active obfuscation is somewhat unique (it is characteristic of allegory).

If, as many commentators assert, the ode really shifts addressees here from King Arcesilaus to include the political exile Damophilus (who is named shortly after this passage), then by telling this *ainigma*, the speaker sets an analogy between Damophilus and Oedipus in that both men as outsiders, travelers, and, crucially, non-experts must “come upon” a riddle and

²⁸ Though Braswell (1988) ad loc. notes that this may be modeled on the Homeric ὠλεσίκαρπος (*Od.* 10.510).

²⁹ For previously discussed examples, see Introduction pp. 38-40 and below Ch. 2 pp. 104-107; below pp. 148-151, 166-174.

³⁰ Braswell (1988) 361.

solve it for the benefit of their respective cities.³¹ Moreover, just like the riddle of the sphinx, the solution to the Pindaric speaker's *ainigma* here is fundamentally "about" its interpreter Damophilus, if we are to believe the general understanding of the ode's historical context. At the same time, because of the specifics of the story and the historical context there is perhaps much less risk of confusing the general solution "exile" with the specific human referent, when compared to the referent confusion that led to the fatal error of Oedipus.³²

C. Staging Deliberation: Pythian 11

In Pythian 11 the road trope is deployed by the speaker in order to emphasize his cognitive failure in encountering enigmatic speech – quite the opposite from the triumphantly clever "leader" speaker of Pythian 4. Such an associative network (between road and cognitive failure) has been all too often misidentified within Pindaric studies. Most notoriously, the idea of the poet's "rambling" incompetence, a common charge of nineteenth-century scholarship, derives from a passage which deploys the road as a site of cognitive challenge, in particular the words of Pythian 11, as I discuss below.

By emphasizing the narrative competence of the epinician speaker, more recent scholarship has understood these words and images as "oral subterfuge," a term coined by Christopher Carey, which posits that the epinician narrator's incompetence is constructed for the

³¹ e.g., Lattmann (2010) 241, Braswell (1988) *ad* 263-269: "The oak represents the exiled Demophilus. The only points of correspondence between the oak of the parable and Demophilus are: 1) the marring of the branches, which corresponds to Demophilus' loss of civic rights and the enjoyment of his property, and (2) the displacement of the oak, which stands for Demophilus' exile."; though cf. Carey (1980) 155-156, who prefers a reference to the Homeric figure of a youth dying on the battlefield.

³² For riddles that are "about" their solver or poser ("self-referentiality"), see e.g. Cook (2006) 18-26, 254-256; likewise the riddle of the incestuous King Antiochus at *Historia Apollinii* 4.

sake of some larger purpose. e.g., an encomiastic foil.³³ Andrew Miller developed this idea further, stressing the difference between the speaker of the poem-narrative and the compositional force behind the ode.³⁴ Incompetence or excessive enthusiasm of the speaker, Miller concludes, can serve as a vehicle for larger themes of interest to the *laudandus* and his clan.

Miller's typology of Pindaric digression is threefold ("associative and quasi-associative transition into myth," "narrative momentum," and "logical drift"), though he himself acknowledges that it is incomplete.³⁵ Indeed, given Miller's idea that digression in Pindar is not actually digressive in narrative or thematic *effect*, I posit that it makes more sense to talk about these "digressions" as "reflections," or moments of the speaker's heightened self-awareness and, crucially, self-definition.³⁶

This acknowledgment, that Pindaric digression is a speech act, leads me to revise another aspect of Miller's approach: the presumption that each of these digressions constitutes a kind of "psychological realism" or an imitation of real, "common," or low register speech patterns. Certainly, "real world" coloring cannot be automatically ruled out even in "high" genres such as epinician, and we have seen examples where a low register is indeed adopted by the epinician speaker, usually in the service of denigrating one group or another (end of N. 7, O. 2). But this ought not always be the case, and it is problematic to assert *a priori* that a poetic speaker who performs a digression must mimic what happens in real world conversation, which seems to me both highly variable and only dimly knowable in the case of archaic Greek speakers. Thus my reading of Pindaric digression, in contrast to Miller's, stresses that many of these digressions

³³ Carey (1980) 5.

³⁴ Miller (1993) 21-23.

³⁵ Miller (1993) 53.

³⁶ That is to say, however digressive or off topic the speaker may admit to being, his speech still advances the interests of the poet/performance.

stage dialogues using enigmatic speech, a dynamic which looks to some combination of the delineation of *sophoi* in the audience, the road trope, a fascination with obscure names, and the deployment of ambiguous syntax.

To contextualize this variability of the road trope *qua* enigmatic device, I first note that within the corpus of surviving enigmatic texts and speakers, “competition” does not only occur between *individuals*. Rather, solutions to difficult questions are often presented as a competition between *ideas*. Deliberation with regards to a riddle solution is quite a natural feature of narratives featuring enigmatic speech.³⁷

Here I call attention to the following Hellenistic *griphos* epigram attributed to Alcaeus of Messene (*fl.* end of third century BCE), which deploys the road trope in order to enact deliberation, a feature which describes communal dialogue in response to enigmatic speech. This short poem takes the form of an encounter with a funerary stele, one of several enigmatic epitaphs in Meleager’s *Garland*, the ancient anthology which formed the basis for the *Greek Anthology*.³⁸ Besides the surface level differences of genre, meter, and form, this poem differs most of all from the Pindaric speaker of Olympian 6 and Pythian 4 in how he deploys the enigmatic road: it is no longer an organizing device or a marker of the speaker’s superiority. If anything, the road image here attests to the speaker’s apparent *inferiority* or ambivalence in the face of a difficult question (what he explicitly terms an αἰνίγμα 9), when compared with archaic *sophoi*.

δίζημαι κατὰ θυμόν ὅτου χάριν ἂ παροδίτις

³⁷ For example, Delphic consultation narratives will include the deliberation over what the enigmatic speech means, and as Johnston (2008) 51-56 argues the literary representations of the process stresses “human agency” (56) and decision making over divine volition.

³⁸ For the epigrammatic genre of epitaph γρίφοι, see Goldhill (1994) 199-207; Gutzwiller (1998) 265 -276, on this specific poem, 268-273, who proposes that “Meleager chose to end the sequence [of riddle poems] with Alcaeus’ reference to Oedipus, the mythological interpreter of riddles.”

5 δισσάκι φεῖ μῶνον γράμμα λέλογχε πέτρος
 λαοτύποις σμίλαις κεκολαμμένον. ἦ ῥα γυναικί
 τᾷ χθονὶ κευθομένῃ. Ξιλιάς ἦν ὄνομα;
 10 τοῦτο γὰρ ἀγγέλλει κορυφούμενος εἰς ἓν ἀριθμός.
 ἦ τὸ μὲν εἰς ὀρθὰν ἀτραπὸν οὐκ ἔμολεν,
 ἀ δ' οἰκτρὸν ναίουσα τόδ' ἡρίον ἔπλετο Φειδῖς;
 νῦν Σφιγγὸς γρίφους Οἰδίπους ἐφρασάμαν.
 αἰνετὸς οὐκ δισσοῖο καμῶν αἴνιγμα τύποιο,
 10 φέγγος μὲν ξυνετοῖς, ἀξυνέτοις δ' ἔρεβος. (Alcaeus Ep. 16³⁹)

I ask within my heart why this road-side
 stone happens to have only the glyph of a double φ,
 etched by stone chisels. The name of the woman
 who is buried in the earth was Chilias, then?
 5 For the number (one thousand: “Chilias”), the sum of the two letters, announces this.
 Or does that not traverse the correct path?
 Was the name of her who dwells in this mournful tomb Pheidis (“cheapskate”/ “twice φ”)?
 Now I Oedipus have pronounced riddles of the sphinx.
 Worthy of praise is the man who wrought a riddle out of a double mold,
 10 light to those who understand and to those who do not, darkness.

There are, however, several key similarities that place this poem within the same
 enigmatic ecosystem of the Pindaric speaker. First, the poem is presented by the speaker as a
 conversation with his *thumos* (1), the organ of the speaker’s intellect that is referenced during the
 staging of an enigmatic dialogue, sometimes with slightly different terminology, in Olympian 1,
 Olympian 2 and Nemean 7.⁴⁰ Next, as in Olympian 2, the speaker of the epigram divides the
 text’s audience into two groups (ξυνετοῖς, ἀξυνέτοις 10). Yet the most important division of
 cognitive labor is only stated obliquely, the “*ainigma* of a double mold” (δισσοῖο αἴνιγμα τύποιο
 9), which refers not only to the “double phi” but also the duplicity or dual nature of the epigram.
 For there exists a division between the surface competition of alternative solutions, which is
 performed by the speaker, and the deeper contest of meaning which takes place between the

³⁹ The text here is Gow and Page (1965), and is equivalent to *AP* 7.429.

⁴⁰ O. 1.4; O. 2.89; N. 7.102 (κέαρ); See further Bruss (2003) 162 n9 on the device in epigram.

poem and the reader; i.e., how to understand the object described while holding in tension the different interpretations. It is in this sense that the *ainigma* offered is “double.”

As elsewhere in epigrams incorporating physical objects, the stone of the epigram (πέτρος 2), the image upon the stone, and the reaction of the speaker (the *Ich-rede*) are all the careful creations of the poetic mind *behind* the epigram, from whom we never actually hear.⁴¹ What is more, the role of the speaker and the reader of the poem share certain features. Like the stone, the poem before us is an object of curiosity that admits various interpretations; and like the speaker of the epigram, the reader must assemble and interpret various bits of information. On the one hand, such a dynamic holds true for any written text, enigmatic or not, but I suggest that the successful assimilation of interpretive data is actively stymied here by several ambiguous points in the narrative. Beyond the text self-describing as an *ainigma*, it is this stymying characteristic that renders the text enigmatic.

The riddle stone is never actually solved by the speaker. Two solutions are offered, yet neither one is confirmed or denied (the verb ἐφρασάμαν 8 does not mean “I solved,” only: “I pronounced/uttered”). When performing the act of deliberation, the speaker deploys the road trope (ἢ τὸ μὲν εἰς ὀρθὰν ἀτραπὸν οὐκ ἔμολεν 6), which shifts from one plausible solution to another. The proliferation of multiple solutions is perhaps not immediately insurmountable. More challenging is the fact that each solution is the other’s opposite. Was this a wealthy woman, somewhat ridiculously named “Thousand,”⁴² who spent lavishly on a visible roadside monument in plain view or rather, a “Cheapskate” who preferred a rough-hewn abbreviation of

⁴¹ For other *Ich-rede* riddles, see the alder riddle discussed in Ch. 1 pp.46-47., and also AP XIV. 5, 7, 8, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 103, 105, 106, 108, 109, 110.

⁴² The name is not attested elsewhere; see G-P (1965) ad 4.

her name? This juxtaposition proposes a kind of unity of opposites, an enigmatic device discussed in Chapter One.

The poem carefully controls the information given about the stone and its environs, and ultimately does not weight the speaker's interpretation either way.⁴³ That the speaker mentions "riddles" (γρίφοι 8) but does not qualify or adequately distinguish them raises still deeper questions. Why use the plural here if only one enigmatic object – the stone – is under consideration? Perhaps this plural slyly acknowledges that the words of the interpreter need further interpretation and that what are presented as solutions are actually riddles themselves.

The final couplet, in which the speaker boasts that he is Oedipus, re-aligns the entire composition as something artificial by 1.) calling attention to the artifice of the "stone-maker" who is the poet and 2.) crafting something of his own, namely, the final statement of audience division in as neat and symmetrical a poetic passage as possible. The speaker makes an etymological play on "praised one/ riddle" (αἰνετός/ αἴνιγμα 9) and articulates the polarity of darkness and light to represent understanding of enigmatic material (10), a motif we have already seen in Nemean 7 and Olympian 6. Puzzlement yields to self-praise, and the persona of the enigmatic speaker threatens to collapse with the role of the poet.

Thus, when the particular conceits of epigram are properly weighed, the Alcaean speaker emerges as a division of labor among poetic mind, speaker and reader.⁴⁴ This cognitively-negotiated persona, as I now discuss, is present in the Pindaric corpus as well. Indeed, though

⁴³ As Gutzweiler (1998) 269 mentions, the assumption that the two *phis* represent the name of a dead woman seems to be the arbitrary invention of the poem's speaker, as if he has more information than we do, such as a sculptural relief depicting the woman.

⁴⁴ For a similar deliberative enigmatic persona, see G-P 32 (= *AP* 7.427), also by Alcaeus.

carefully refined and compressed within the bounds of epigram, this network in a more diffuse form may well have originated with Pindar, specifically as it is constructed in Pythian 11.

In the myth of Pythian 11, the so-called “little *Oresteia*,” a similar set of dynamics to the Hellenistic epigram *griphos* emerges: speaker and poet are split along the lines of cognitive challenge, different solutions to a question are raised for the audience to puzzle out/reconcile, and praise is given to an entity outside the text, here the victor and his clan, which realigns the speaker’s relationship with the audience. The speaker deploys a series of questions including ambiguous gnomes in order to open up to deliberation the Atreid myth and other versions of it (notably, Aeschylus’). Thus the speaker stages two dialogues simultaneously: one with the performance audience, and one with poetic precedent. At issue is the ultimate cause behind the murderous action of Clytaemnestra, a question raised by a series of rhetorical questions presented as answers to this problem:

25 πότερόν νιν ἄρ’ Ἰφιγένει’ ἐπ’ Εὐρίπῳ
 σφαχθεῖσα τῆλε πάτρας ἔκνισεν βαρυπάλαμον ὄρσαι χόλον;
 ἢ ἑτέρῳ λέχεϊ δαμαζομένην
 ἔννυχοι πάραγον κοῖται; (P. 11.11-25)

25 Was it then Iphigeneia being slaughtered at Euripus
 far from home that spurred her heavy-handed wrath?
 Or did a nocturnal coupling lead her astray,
 being tamed/spurned by another partner?

The speaker offers the murder of Iphigenia (22-23) and her adultery with Aegisthus (23-24) as possible motives. As in the epigram, the speaker never settles on a definitive answer or moral for the dilemma and deploys the road trope to signal his ambivalence in the face of a hard to answer question. Beyond these similarities with the Hellenistic epigram, I suggest that the speaker also shares certain characteristics with the traditional role of an enigmatic competitor. These mainly have to do with how the use of ambiguous language in a way that recalls the

amphibolai gnomai of the Homeric *Contest*. From this perspective, the Pindaric speaker incorporates elements of both Archaic and Hellenistic riddling personae. Chronologically speaking, this is a rather obvious point; in practice, however, it entails a subtle manipulation of a traditional form. In sum, as with Nemean 7, we can observe how the Pindaric text's engagement with an element of the enigmatic tradition (here, competition) authorizes his text against another, that of Aeschylus.

Here is how I understand the ode's development of enigmatic speech:

1. Kenning "fields of Pylades..." (ἀρούραισι Πυλάδα 15 = "Delphi")
2. Orestes is said to be rescued by his nurse "Arsinoe" (Ἀρσινόα...τρόφος 17-18)
3. *amphibolai gnomai* (25-30, detailed below)

First, the speaker raises the Atreid myth apparently because he is jolted by the phrase "fields of Pylades" (15) in reference to Delphi, which commentators have long recognized as a kenning.⁴⁵ This kenning speaks to the performance community at Thebes. As part of the ode's larger resetting of the mythical network that stresses Sparta's ties to Thebes and Delphi, the phrase carried special political significance, especially if the ode was performed in the mid 450s, as has been the preferred reading of more recent commentators.⁴⁶ It was at this period in the mid-fifth century that Thebes fought against Athens and was supported by the Spartans at Tanagra, which likely explains the ode's emphasis on Spartan mythic connections and heroes.⁴⁷ Moreover,

⁴⁵ On the description of Pylades, see Hubbard (2010) 194-195; Slater (1979) 63, who notes the similarity to O. 1.24, which he calls a kenning for Olympia.

⁴⁶ Traditionally the ode was assigned to the 470s, e.g. Wilamowitz (1922) 259-263 and Finglass (2007) 2-4, but this has long been doubted in favor of 454 BCE, which is the other Pythian victory date given by the Greek victor list regarding Thrasydaeus. As Bowra (1936) 135-136 understood, no argument for the earlier date can account for the ode's emphasis on Sparta, given that Thebes (the city of the victor and the poet) was apparently hostile to Sparta throughout the 470s (acc. to Plut. *Them.* 20). For the full argument in favor of the later date and a discussion of its significance, see Hubbard (1990) 350 n 22-23, (2010) 191-192, and the comments of Kurke (2013) 150-163.

⁴⁷ Elsewhere the ode refers to Orestes as Laconian (16); the death of Agamemnon (and thus his cult site) as being at Amyclae (32); Iolaus and the Dioskouroi as being venerated together (62-65); On Thebes in the 450s, see Thuc.

the present discussion takes seriously the ode's response to Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, which critics have long detected.⁴⁸

The kenning for "Delphi" represents the first in a series of narrative disjuncts induced by difficult signifiers, that is, words and concepts whose point of reference is obscured or ambiguous. In reflecting upon the myth, the speaker includes the name Arsinoa which, as Norwood notes, is not attested in any other extant version of the Atreid story.⁴⁹ For this reason, the possibility of an obscure name placed initially in a clause full of names and separated by hyperbaton from the noun in apposition which identifies it (τρόφος 18), I (somewhat tentatively) include this word in the sequence of enigmatic textual features.⁵⁰

A second disjunct is presented in the speaker's question about what drove Clytaemnestra to act. The speaker asks whether "nightly couplings" (ἐννυχιοῖ... κοῖται 25) spurred her wrath and conveys with a participle that she was conquered by the "bed of another" (ἐτέρῳ λέχει 24). The reference here is ambiguous, since it could refer to Clytaemnestra's jealousy over Agamemnon's new bride or her own affair with Aegisthus.

Finally, and most importantly, though Slater has been criticized for his "stepping stones" interpretation of the gnome sequence, we do observe a similar *mélange* of traditional wisdom in

I.107-108, Diod. Sic. 11.81.2, and Kurke's useful summary (2013) 164-167 of the sources on the so-called "First Peloponnesian War" with regards to Thebes.

⁴⁸ The discussion of Kurke (2013) 115-125 recontextualizes the earlier view that Aeschylus' trilogy merely "had an impact" on Pindar; rather Kurke argues, the ode responds to Aeschylus' pro-Athenian ideologically charged association of Atreid and Delphic cults with Athens and Athenian allies such as Argos; earlier discussions include Farnell (1932), Bowra (1936), Finley (1955), Robbins (1986), and Herington (1984).

⁴⁹ Norwood (1945) 126, who interprets the name as an etymologizing signal (*arti noos* "sagacious") that cognitive demands are made of the audience. Chapter 2 pp. 100-101 argued for something similar in the epithet given to Apollo in Olympian 6 (ἄρτιεπής).

⁵⁰ Hubbard (2010) 194 n31 notes the significance of names in the myth portion of the ode, pointing out the elaborate ring composition in Pylades-Orestes (15-16), Cassandra Agamemnon (20), Agamemnon-Cassandra (31-33), Orestes-Strophius (the father of Pylades, 34-35).

certain of the *amphibolai gnomai* of the *Contest* (320-321).⁵¹ In that passage, Homer and Hesiod ostensibly offer advice before a ruler (the deceased king's brother) on aristocratic virtues, yet the rapid-fire, laconic character of each saying and the lack of a logical progression from one to another seem to call into question the usefulness of such an exercise qua *parainesis*, that is, a very traditional function of gnomes. Rather, this is a rhetorical showpiece, not unlike the kind Gorgias and others delighted in. Answering questions of value and reciting traditional wisdom is a major part of the archaic enigmatic competitor's repertoire, and in the *Contest* such exchanges are not distinguished in any way from the tricky verse completion exercises. Thus this sequence, a rapid fire list of *amphibolai gnomai*, while seeming to offer advice and warning those holding power in the political situation of Pythian 11, looks back to enigmatic material and establishes the identity of the speaker as an enigmatic competitor.

Perhaps the designation of these Pindaric lines as *amphibolai gnomai* deserves further justification, since on the one hand, all gnomes, because they tend to generalize, are essentially "ambiguous" with their point of reference. I suggest we can detect ambiguity of three kinds: syntax (A), meaning/interpretation (B), and how the gnomes of Pythian 11 are applied to the myth(C). Here is the "stepping-stone" gnome sequence, which I have slightly adapted from Slater's original article⁵²:

1.) Adultery is a great error for new wives and not able to be concealed from "outside gossip" or "by foreign tongues" (25-27: τὸ δὲ νέαις ἀλόχοις ἔχθιστον ἀμπλάκιον καλύψαι τ' ἀμάχανον ἀλλοτρίαισι γλώσσαις)

⁵¹ Slater (1979) 65-68, designated an "argument from desperation" at Kurke (2013) 122; *Gnomai*, of course, can simply mean "sentences," and indeed most of the *gnomai* from the *Contest* are simple verses that are puzzling through pronoun ambiguity when divorced from context or split in half (107-137). However, the *Contest* compiler also includes interrogative propositions of value or *sententiae* at 155-175. These are identical with our (Aristotelian) sense of *gnome*. As they are both value propositions and puzzling in their ambiguity, the *gnomai* in Pythian 11 can be said to combine both of the characteristics of gnomes in the *Contest*.

⁵² Slater (1979) 66.

- 2.) One's fellow citizens are evil speakers (28: κακολόγοι δὲ πολῖται.)
- 3.) Prosperity invites a corresponding envy (29: ἴσχει τε γὰρ ὄλβος οὐ μείονα φθόνον)
- 4.) The one breathing low to the ground roars invisibly (30: ὁ δὲ χαμηλὰ πνέων ἄφαντον βρέμει.)

The first gnome bears little relevance to the situation of Clytaemnestra, who can hardly be called a “new wife.”⁵³ Of course, it is precisely the threat of such a new wife in Cassandra that was found ἔχθιστον to Clytaemnestra. It may not be a coincidence that the persona of a new bride is deployed by Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* to describe the unveiling of her enigmatic utterances.⁵⁴ This suggests a degree of C.) ambiguity of mythical applicability, which is certainly present in the second half of the saying. For it is possible to construe the syntax of 1.) two ways, depending on how one takes the dative *allotriaisi glōssais* (27) – to conceal “from the tongues of others” or “by means of strange speech” (which could quite naturally refer to Cassandra's prophetic babbling before her murder in the *Agamemnon*).

The second gnome is straightforward enough, though perhaps a bit repetitive of 1.). This kind of repetitious elaboration is common to Homeric gnomes, as Lardinois has discussed.⁵⁵ The question of C.) the gnome's applicability to the myth is raised by the use of the plural “citizens.” The designation of a citizen body, which is anachronistic to the Atreid myth, speaks better to the present situation of Thrasydaeus, who as a victorious athlete does enjoy a marked and potentially precarious relationship with his fellow citizens.⁵⁶

⁵³ As noted by Miller (1993).

⁵⁴ Aesch. Ag. 1178-79: καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων/ ἔσται δεδορκὼς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην: (“No longer will my oracular utterance be seen like through the veil of a newly-married bride...”)

⁵⁵ Lardinois (1997) 219f.

⁵⁶ See Kurke (1991) 195-200 on the *phthonos* of fellow citizens.

The third gnome affirms the final arc of the *Agamemnon* while again speaking, perhaps, to the situation of the victor and the potential for *phthonos*. This last maxim thus shifts focus yet again, away from the immediate reference Atreid myth to an unnamed oppositional figure (ὁ δὲ χαμηλὰ πνέων 30), who has been interpreted any number of ways.⁵⁷ This again suggests C.). Whatever the case, the metaphor employed to describe his action somewhat confusingly blends senses (sight/sound) and thus has aroused quite a few interpretations.⁵⁸

Building on the idea that the traditional interpretation of the “invisible” roar signifies not just “envy” from the perspective of commoners looking upon their overlords, but rather an unseen threat from the perspective of rulers looking upon their subjects, I suggest it is possible contextualize this gnome as a species of *ainos* material.⁵⁹ The idea is similar in theme to a fragment from Stesichorus, which is quoted by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* and also warns those in power who behave badly about the threat of those beneath them:

ἀρμόττει δ' ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις καὶ τὰ Λακωνικὰ ἀποφθέγματα καὶ τὰ αἰνιγματώδη, οἷον εἴ τις λέγει ὅπερ Στησίχορος ἐν Λοκροῖς εἶπεν, ὅτι οὐ δεῖ ὑβριστὰς εἶναι, ὅπως μὴ οἱ τέττιγες χαμόθεν ᾄδωσιν. ἀρμόττει δὲ γνωμολογεῖν ἡλικία μὲν πρεσβυτέρων, περὶ δὲ τούτων ὧν ἔμπειρός τις ἐστίν, ὥστε τὸ μὲν μὴ τηλικούτον ὄντα γνωμολογεῖν ἀπρεπὲς ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ μυθολογεῖν, περὶ δὲ ὧν ἄπειρος, ἡλίθιον καὶ ἀπαίδευτον. σημεῖον δὲ ἰκανόν· οἱ γὰρ ἀγροῖκοι (Arist. *Rhet.* 1394b-1395a = *PMG* 281b)

In such cases Laconic apophthegms and riddling sayings are suitable; as, for instance, to say what Stesichorus said to the Locrians, that they ought not to be insolent, lest their cicadas should be forced to chirp from the ground. The use of maxims is suitable for one who is advanced in years, and in regard to things in which one has experience; since the use of maxims before such an age is unseemly, as also is story-telling; and to speak about things of which one has no experience shows foolishness and lack of education. Trans. Reese (1926).

⁵⁷ Gerber (1983) and Young (1968) 4 n2 (among others) prefer the referent to be a low-prestige individual who does not have the means or position to rival outright with a ruler.

⁵⁸ See Hubbard (1990) 343-344 n1-2 for a survey of these.

⁵⁹ Hubbard (1990) 347.

After such a whirlwind of obscure language and a demonstration of his mastery over the repertoire of gnomic and perhaps even fabular material, the speaker seems to reflect, finally, upon the scope of his deliberative speech act, by employing the trope of the road. Indeed, this is not the same road as the one in Olympian 6 or Pythian 4; rather it is the road of cognitive confusion that in the Alcaeus epigram we saw to be the dividing mark or authorial seam between speaker and poem as enigmatic object:

40 ἦρ', ὦ φίλοι, κατ' ἀμευσίπορον τρίοδον ἐδινάθην,
 ὀρθὰν κέλευθον ἰὼν τὸ πρίν· ἢ μέ τις ἄνεμος ἔξω πλόου
 ἔβαλεν, ὥς ὅτ' ἄκατον ἐνναλίαν; Μοῖσα, τὸ δὲ τεόν, εἰ μισθοῖο συνέθευ
 παρέχειν
 φωνὰν ὑπάργυρον, ἄλλοτ' ἄλλα ταρασσέμεν
 ἢ πατρὶ Πυθονίκῳ
 τό γέ νυν ἢ Θρασυδάῳ,
 45 τῶν εὐφροσύνα τε καὶ δόξ' ἐπιφλέγει. (P. 11.38-45)

40 Can it be, my friends, that I got confused where the way forked,
 when before I was going on the straight road? Or did some wind throw me
 off course, like a small boat at sea?
 Muse, it is your duty, since you have contracted to hire
 your voice for silver, to keep it moving this way and that,
 either now to his father, Pythonicus,
 or to Thrasydaeus,
 45 for their celebration and glory are ablaze. (trans. Race)

Besides the road trope which enacts enigmatic deliberation, several markers here characterize the speech as enigmatic. To introduce his digression, the speaker chooses a convivial form of address (ὦ φίλοι 38) which recalls the intimacy of elites displayed by other enigmatic speakers.⁶⁰

The speaker shifts addressees in line 40 to the Muse. Leslie Kurke has understood this acknowledgment of the epinician financial contract as a generic marker of the difference

⁶⁰ Thus O. 1.16: οἷα παίζομεν φίλων ἄνδρες ἀμφὶ θαμὰ τράπεζαν; cf. also, φίλον ἐς ἄνδρ' ἄγων κλέος (N. 7.6), where the context is similarly playful with the enigmatic mode of “true names.” φίλος is used as a vocative also at P. 1.92, in advice to Hieron not to be swindled by deceitful profiteers. This diverges somewhat from traditional interpretations, on which, see Kurke (2013) 133-134. Also relevant for this interpretation is Ar. R. 1411, where Dionysus addresses the competing poets as φίλοι.

between epinician and tragedy, especially the image of Oedipus at the crossroads, which by the fourth century becomes almost a stand-in for the entire genre of tragedy.⁶¹ In addition, any reference to Oedipus conveyed by “crossroads” (τρίοδον 38) must call to mind the language of the *ainigma* (e.g., τρίποδες) related to that myth and the semantic confusion inherent in the symbol of “crossroads.”⁶² Indeed, an association between Oedipus and enigmatic speech is explicitly the case in Pythian 4, where the “wisdom of Oedipus” establishes the speaker’s enigmatic persona.⁶³ Alternatively, *triodon* also evokes the Delphic *tripodos*, from which much enigmatic speech emanates.

The speaker re-orientes himself by reminding the audience who is worthy of praise – that is, the victor and his clan “light the way,” in much the same way as the Alcaeus epigram ends with a realignment: the acknowledgment of praise for the one who made the riddle.⁶⁴ This lucidity contrasts implicitly with the invisibility of the roar emanating from the ground, from the *gnome* sequence above. The language of light and darkness lends itself naturally to enigmatic discourse; we have already seen the motif of darkness and light in connection with the True Names of Nemean 7 and Olympian 6.⁶⁵ But whereas the final wordplay of the Alcaean epigram signals by verbal artifice (a pun) the artificiality of his poetic creation and indeed the artificiality of the entire reader-poet-persona dynamic, the Pindaric speaker here constructs a delicate, unresolved counterpoise, as I now explain.

⁶¹ Kurke (2013) 115-117, citing Taplin (1982) 157, who notes that the tragic stage is the intersection of three roads (*eisodoi*).

⁶² Kurke (2013) 118-120. See above n. 18 for how visual culture of the fifth century possibly represented the riddle of the sphinx using this word. Literary sources include Hes. *Op.* 533 and Aesch. *Ag.* 80.

⁶³ See above, pp. 137-138.

⁶⁴ P. 11.45: τῶν εὐφροσύνα τε καὶ δόξ’ ἐπιφλέφει.

⁶⁵ See respectively Ch. 1 pp. 51-55 and Ch. 2 p. 93.

One movement in this ode is toward the staging of cognitive failure by the speaker, a performance which perhaps validated the experience of many in the audience who did not subscribe to, or were not familiar with, the Aeschylean version of the myth presented by the speaker. Of course, modern scholarship has argued that the ode speaks to the particular concerns of a performance audience at Thebes and perhaps in reperformance in Sparta.⁶⁶ Still, it remains that the image of the road overcomes the speaker rather than distinguish him as possessed of cognitive skill – just as it did the epigram speaker, at least in the first half of the poem. Ideas and interpretations proliferate and compete with one another; ambiguity is conveyed by gnomes as a strategy that fosters competition between interpretations and interpreter poets such as Pindar and Aeschylus. The enigmatic features of the text thus offer a site of deliberation, just as enigmatic speech did for symposiasts and oracle consultants alike.

On the other hand, a separate, though related movement in the ode empowers the speaker by innovating upon the traditional role of enigmatic competitor. This is his final condemnation of the “lot of tyrannies” (53), which happens towards the end of the composition after “redirecting course” and praising the victor’s clan’s accomplishments. To praise a monarch is a traditional social function of enigmatic speech for archaic sages.⁶⁷ In riddling contests, the reverence of enigmatic speakers for authority is even built into the structure of the narrative, as it falls to the lot of the tyrant to pass judgment over those who speak through riddles, as e.g. Paneides in the *Contest*, or else to carefully regulate the production and interpretation of enigmatic speech, as seems to have been the case of Onomacritus and the Peisistratids.⁶⁸ I suggest that, like these earlier figures, the enigmatic speaker of Pythian 11 also engages with social hierarchy, but

⁶⁶ See. n. 48 above.

⁶⁷ Generally, see Konstantakos (2004) 104-119 on Bias and the Egyptian Pharoah (104-105), Polyidus and Minos (105-108); Croesus and his oracle testing (108-110), though not strictly a riddle test.

⁶⁸ Hdt. 7.6-7

markedly deviates from the traditional reverence for the ruler and instead advises that the “middle estate” should be praised and the rulers censured.

- 50 θεόθεν ἐραίμαν καλῶν,
 δυνατὰ μαιόμενος ἐν ἀλικία.
 τῶν γὰρ ἀνὰ πόλιν εὐρίσκων τὰ μέσα μακροτέρῳ
 {σὺν} ὄλβῳ τεθαλότα, μέφομ’ αἷσαν τυραννίδων·
 ξυναῖσι δ’ ἀμφ’ ἀρεταῖς τέταμαι· φθονεροὶ δ’ ἀμύ-
55 νονται. <ἀλλ’> εἴ τις ἄκρον ἐλὼν
 ἡσυχᾷ τε νεμόμενος αἰνὰν ὕβριν
 ἀπέφυγεν, μέλανος {δ’} ἄν ἐσχατίαν
 καλλίονα θανάτου <στείχοι> γλυκυτάτῃ γενεᾷ
 εὐώνυμον κτεάνων κρατίστην χάριν πορών (P. 11.50-59)
- 50 May I lust after noble things from heaven,
 yearning for those things that are possible for my age.
 For when I find the middle/mean in a city to have flourished with longer
 prosperity, I find fault with the lot of tyrannies.
 I have struggled for common achievements, and the grudge holders are held at
55 bay. But if someone has reached the top
 and, consigned to retirement, escapes deadly hubris,
 he would traverse an end more beautiful than black death
 by providing to his cherished progeny
 that most powerful of possessions – the favor of a good name.

This passage is usually understood in terms of its relevance to the current form of government in Thebes (the victor’s city and thus the most likely site of the primary performance), which is why the question of the ode’s date looms so large for most critics.⁶⁹ Without denying the value of historicizing interpretation here or elsewhere, I note that by deploying the “ruler frame” the Pindaric speaker resumes the invocation of the enigmatic contest form, capping the authorization of his own (and perhaps originally, Stesichorus’) Spartan *Oresteia* over and against Aeschylus’ Argive version. For whereas previously the speaker

⁶⁹ On the anti-tyrant nature of the ode, see Young (1968) 19-21; In considering candidates for reperformance Hubbard (2010) 197-198 notes that “A Spartan audience may therefore have heard Pindar’s statement about *ta mesa* somewhat differently from Thebans, with more attention to overtones of moderation in personal lifestyle.”

condensed the myth into gnomes and staged his own cognitive failure, here he fashions himself as a proponent of *ta mesa*, a polysemous term that could refer to the moderate oligarchy of Thebes post Oenophyta. Likewise, perhaps “blaming the lot of tyrannies” speaks to the unjust results of enigmatic contests, as it is often the contestant portrayed as the people’s favorite, whether Euripides or Homer who loses out to the arbitrary choice of a single very powerful individual, such as Paneides’ brother or Dionysus. On the other hand, the Pindaric speaker stages a dialogue full of enigmatic speech in contrast to the traditional ruler frame. Overall, then, it is the staging of cognitive failure that allows the speaker to finally step out from behind the mask of enigmatic competitor and assume a partisan, socially acceptable role as the proud voice of a Theban public poet supporting a Theban victor in the 450s BCE.

D. Communal Authority and Child Riddling: Pythian 8.39-55

Pythian 8 has always enjoyed a share of critical attention, perhaps owing to its very famous adaptation of gnomes about the human condition toward the end of the work.⁷⁰ Other commentators have called attention to the outsize role that prophecy plays in the work; it seems likely (though remains an issue of some debate) that the epinician speaker reports a prophecy in the voice of the poet, which would be unique in the Pindaric corpus.⁷¹ But what concerns the present discussion is the distinction between enigmatic speech and professionalized divination, a distinction that very much holds true in this ode. The speaker moves from an uncertain enigmatic

⁷⁰ On the background to the ode generally, see Pfeijffer (1995), Hubbard (1993), Miller (1993).

⁷¹ P. 8.57-8: “Ἀλκμᾶνα στεφάνοισι βάλλω, ῥαίνω δὲ καὶ ὕμνω γείτων ὅτι μοι καὶ κτεάνων φύλαξ ἐμῶν ὑπάντασεν ἰόντι γᾶς ὀμφαλὸν παρ’ αἰοίδιμον, μαντευμάτων τ’ ἐφάψατο συγγόνιοις τέχναις...” “I shower Alcmeon with crowns and sprinkle him with song.” There are varying views on the identity of the speaker. Beginning with the scholiasts (Σ P. 8.78a, 82, 83a), some prefer the encounter to be narrated by the epinician victor, which would be unparalleled and confuse the meaning. On these interpretations, see Hubbard (1993) 194 n3 with further references.

utterance of his own telling, to a more authorized act of divination at a localized shrine, and then finally, to the panhellenic prophetic power of Pythian Apollo. In order to discuss this unique development which moves from less to more authoritative, I call attention to a particular passage midway through the ode, which contains the only other occurrence of an *ainiss*- root in the epincia.⁷² As in Nemean 6, this passage confuses prophecy with *ainigma* telling and does so through the speech act of a child. In this case, the child is Amphiaraos, who is biologically an adult, but who the narrator describes as a *pais*:

- 40 ποτ' Οἰκλέος παῖς ἐν ἑπταπύλοισι ἰδὼν
 υἱοὺς Θήβαις αἰνίζατο παρμένοντας αἰχμᾶ,
 ὁπότε' ἀπ' Ἄργεος ἦλυθον
 δευτέραν ὁδὸν Ἐπίγονοι.
 ὧδ' εἶπε μαρναμένων:
 'φυᾶ τὸ γενναῖον ἐπιπρέπει
 45 ἐκ πατέρων παισὶ λῆμα. θαέομαι σαφεῶς
 δράκοντα ποικίλον αἰθᾶς Ἀλκμᾶν' ἐπ' ἀσπίδος
 νωμῶντα πρῶτον ἐν Κάδμου πύλαις.
 ὁ δὲ καμὼν προτέρᾳ πάθα
 νῦν ἄρειονος ἐνέχεται
 50 ὄρνιχος ἀγγελία
 Ἄδραστος ἦρως: τὸ δὲ οἴκοθεν
 ἀντία πράξει. μοῦνος γὰρ ἐκ Δαναῶν στρατοῦ
 θανόντος ὅστέα λέξαις υἱοῦ, τύχα θεῶν
 ἀφίξεται λαῶ σὺν ἀβλαβεῖ
 55 Ἄβαντος εὐρυχόρου ἀγνιάς.' (P. 8.39-55)

- 40 Once when the child of Oicles at the seven-gates of Thebes saw
 children standing by their spears, he told an *ainigma*
 after the Epigonoι arrived from Argos
 on that second march.
 In this way he spoke, in the midst of them fighting:
 "A noble resolve from their fathers shines over
 45 the excellence in these children. I clearly mark Alcmeon,
 wielding a patterned serpent on his fiery shield,
 the first at the gates of Cadmus.
 And the one who suffered in the previous disaster,
 now has the tidings of a better omen:

⁷² The other occurrence is in the fragments (S-M 177d), in reference to the riddle of the sphinx.

50 Adrastus, the hero! But at home he will fare the opposite.
 For he alone of the Danaan army
 having gathered the bones of his dead son
 will with his people unharmed by the fortune of the god
 reach the wide-open avenues of Argos,
 55 which belongs to Abas.”

The Pindaric narrator wields great creative power in setting the scene. Not only does he render Amphiaraus a child (παῖς 39) and the rest of the Argive generals children (υἱοῦς 40), but also, apparently, has resurrected Amphiaraios from the grave, since the utterance is understood by most critics to happen at the second expedition to Thebes (Ἐπίγονοι 42; Amphiaraus famously is swallowed whole by the earth during the first expedition, an event which gives rise to his oracle at Thebes⁷³). Similar to Apollo’s infinite gaze in Olympian 8, the seer’s vision here is both simultaneous with his speech (θαέομαι σαφὲς...νωμῶντα 45-47) and proleptic regarding future events (μοῦνος... ἀφίξεται 52-55). Unlike Apollo’s, however, the visual stimuli here seem not to call for any act of interpretation and the imagery presented is not portent-like in its level of obscurity or strangeness.⁷⁴

The fact of Amphiaraios’ demise has always exercised commentators, and as the scholia discuss, the verb governing Amphiaraios’ speech (αἰνίξατο 40) seems out of place, since there is no language which is easily identifiable as an enigmatic speech device in what follows; no calls for interpreters, strings of images or gnomic material; nor is there represented any supernatural act of cognition or *sophia* which might satisfy how enigmatic speech is represented elsewhere in

⁷³ Paus. IX.8.3.

⁷⁴ Some commentators assert that the snake is a mantic symbol. cf. O. 8.41-46 and Apollo’s interpretation of snakes; thus also Σ P. 8.66b.

Pindar.⁷⁵ One possibility, of course, is that we simply remain ignorant of whatever wordplay or other hidden-meaning device was originally understood by these lines.

P.E. van 't Wout has convincingly argued for a second possibility: that the utterance of Amphiaraos is made during the first expedition (*Septem*) and not the second (*Epigonoι*).⁷⁶ This would certainly present a strong narrative disjunct to the audience and to the internal audience (which may make some critics uneasy⁷⁷), and as I argued in the Introduction, the verb “he told an *ainigma*” (αἰνίξατο 40) indicates a perceived deficit from the perspective of the hearers of a prophecy. Thus, the subject of the genitive absolute (μαρναμένων 43) is ambiguous, even though the temporal clause of the previous line references the *Epigonoι*.

Moreover, the verb (αἰνίξατο 40) could refer here to the narrative frame of “a child seeing children,” since, as I discussed above, children are represented as riddlers in the Greek literary record. By shifting the timeframe to the *Septem* expedition, the noun “sons” (υἱοὺς 40) becomes ambiguous, since it could now refer to the sons (*Epigonoι*) that Amphiaraos “sees clearly” in his vision of the future, rather than those standing in front of him. The enigmatic speaker thus delivers to those beneath him in speaking hierarchy (because of their youth) a message about inborn nobility (φυῶ τὸ γενναῖον ἐπιπρέπει/ ἐκ πατέρων παισὶ λῆμα 45). This gnomic material not only suits the context of the timeshift, it would also validate a child-mediated model of riddling, even though they are “imagined” children.

⁷⁵ Σ P. 8. 57a: ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀπεφθέγγετο· οὐ γὰρ αἰνιγματωδῶς εἶπε. One could argue that the subsequent verb εἶπε signifies that the narrator more prosaically reports the salient parts of his prophecy.

⁷⁶ van 't Wout (2006) 4-5. The main obstacle in this reading is the coordination of the clause beginning in ὁπότ (41)

⁷⁷ Miller (1993) finds fault with the speech for its digressive nature; such a timeshift would qualify as an even more significant digression, though one that I believe suits the context of the speaking verb.

To the internal audience, Amphiaraos' speech is enigmatic because they cannot see the future and perhaps do not know who Alcmeon, Adrastus' son, is.⁷⁸ To the external audience, these words are can also qualify as enigmatic speech and not merely on account of the timeshift. First, proceeding from the Introduction's discussion of child riddlers, I note that the framing of the riddling episode (Amphiaraos is a *pais* speaking to the external audience as well) presents the speech as a child mediated riddling episode.

Second, as we have seen above in regards to Nemean 6 and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, objects of interpretation, including wordplay, can work in conjunction with *ainigmata*. I would propose that the word *areionos* (49) constitutes a play on the name of Adrastus' horse Areion (Ἀρείων, gen. Ἀρείονος), who traditionally (Paus. 8.826.8, quoting from the *Thebaid*) saved him from death at Thebes.⁷⁹ Given the context of the speaking verb *ainissomai*, this would qualify as an example of etymological wordplay, and is comparable to how the Pindaric narrator withholds Delphic enigmatic speech in favor of his own wordplay elsewhere in the epinicia.⁸⁰ Moreover, the noun-adjective phrase "better omen" which this play constitutes, (ἀρείονος... ὄρνιχος 49-50) entails a clever polysemous juxtaposition of two animals, since the word for omen here is "bird" (ὄρνις).⁸¹ Both words signify a field of reference outside their *nomen*. Thus the external audience are drawn into the riddling performance of a child in the same way that the internal audience are flummoxed by it.

⁷⁸ I am in agreement with van 't Wout (2006) who notes that the verb of speaking which bookends Amphiaraos' prophecy ἐφθεγγάτ') φθεγγομαι is focalized through the minds of the internal (epigonoι) audience, who perceive his speech as "inarticulate sound."

⁷⁹ Van 't Wout (2006) 4-5 argues that other aspects of the scene are drawn from the *Thebaid*.

⁸⁰ cf. Stat. *Theb.* 11.442, where Arion prophesies doom for the first expedition. cf. also Prop. II.34b, which refers to the voice of Arion.

⁸¹ This wordplay target seems to have been a particular favorite of Pindar's: see Appendix under O. 1 and O. 6 for other Pindaric wordplays on the names of specific animals.

By appreciating the wordplay in the passage, we can understand the sequence of divine interpretation in this ode. For immediately after this dialogue between *paides*, which is marked as a poetic creation by wordplay and is not understood by the internal audience, the speaker recounts a more authoritative act of divine interpretation, saying that he himself (καὶ αὐτὸς 56) has received prophetic utterances (μαντευμάτων 60) from his “neighbor” (γείτων 58) who possesses “inborn arts” (συγγόνιοι τεχναίς 60), a designation which points to the famous oracle of Amphiaraus outside Thebes.⁸² Thus the speaker puts the enigmatic speech of the ode, which was produced by notional children, in conversation with the oracular utterance produced by a real mantic shrine. The latter site of mantic authority authorizes the non-professional enigmatic speech of the former.

This is not the end of the conversation, however. For it is on the basis of the receipt of these professional utterances from Amphiaraus about the future success of the victor that the Pindaric speaker engages in dialogue in the following lines with a yet higher oracular authority: Pythian Apollo, whose mantic power authorizes Amphiaraus, the enigmatic speech of Alcmeon, and the victor himself. I have underlined the syntax that stresses the contrast of the oracular authority of Apollo with the previous *ainigma* dialogue and interpretation:

τὸ δ', Ἐκαταβόλε, πάνδοκον
 ναὸν εὐκλέα διανέμων
 Πυθῶνος ἐν γυάλοις,
 τὸ μὲν μέγιστον τόθι χαρμάτων
 65 ὥπασας, οἴκοι δὲ πρόσθεν ἀρπαλέαν δόσιν
 πενταεθλίου σὺν ἑορταῖς ὑμαῖς ἐπάγαγες· (P. 8.61-66)

But you, far-shooter, ruling over
 your famous shrine that welcomes all

⁸² On the identification of the “neighbor” with Amphiaraus rather than Alcmeon, see Hubbard (1993), who corrects the previous view that the producer of μαντεύματα was Alcmeon. In sum, Alcmeon cannot be the oracular neighbor because there is no record of his oracular cult, or even that he was associated with any kind of divination: rather, he is marked as uncertain and unskilled with regards to divine interpretation.

in the hollows of Pytho,
you have granted the greatest of delights there
65 and at your home you awarded the alluring prize
of the pentathlon with in your festival.

This sequence of *ainigma* dialogue authorized by local mantic authority which is in turn authorized by Panhellenic mantic authority encapsulates the use of enigmatic speech as a site of communal dialogue. For it is the local Theban shrine of Amphiaraos that occupies the middle term between Pindaric enigmatic speech (which it authorizes) and Pythian Apollo (by which it is authorized). Thus local authority is set in dialogue with both the present performance and a Panhellenic institution. Moreover, in an ode composed by a Theban poet for an Aeginetan victor in the mid fifth century, such a move could represent real sociopolitical meaning, namely, the bonds between Aegina and Thebes, both of which had at different times found themselves under the yoke of Athenian oppression.⁸³ As in the Introduction, I have argued against the automatic association of enigmatic discourse with the institution of divine interpretation in epinician poetry. Rather, I have shown that the Pindaric text constructs divine interpretation in contrast with non-professional interpretation, a field of speech described as *ainigma*, often to the former's detriment. Yet in this passage, we observe the converse dynamic; where a prophetic utterance lends credence to the truth value of the initial *ainigma*. The notional separation between the two kinds of speaking still stands.

In sum, although enigmatic speech can authorize a text against another set of texts, as I showed in Chapter 1 with Homer and in the present chapter with divine interpretation, those same utterances must receive their authority and cultural capital from elsewhere. To that end, enigmatic speech in the Pindaric corpus draws on several different resources including ritual and childhood play, the barest traces of which survive in the literary record. And in that sense, the

⁸³ Thus Hubbard (1993) 202-203.

role of enigmatic speech and riddling in the Pindaric corpus replicates the position of enigmatic speakers in the archaic and classical literary record. Finally, I emphasize that even while the epinician narrator carefully differentiates his own role from that of a divine interpreter, the association of enigmatic speech with divine speech remains a strong one in the Greek mind; after all, most ritual arises in the context of *ta theia*; likewise, child/adolescent riddlers such as Hermes are themselves gods or are intimately connected with the gods, such as Cassandra. All the same, as has been the aim of this entire study, it is critical that our appreciation for how enigmatic speech was perceived accounts for the substantial diversity of enigmatic forms and crucially, contexts.

Epilogue: Synthesis and Mutability

We have now encountered what I take to be the three main dialogue types staged by enigmatic speech in Pindaric poetry. A secondary aim has been demonstrating the field of continuity that exists between the kinds of dialogue in Pindar's enigmatic speech and elsewhere in Greek literature. The sum of these two frames ought to embody *an* enigmatic tradition, both intertextual and embedded, within the poetry of Pindar. At the same time, this study cannot claim to be comprehensive of all epinician poetry or, even less so, of all dialogue types embodied by enigmatic speech in Greek literature.

A further qualification deserves mentioning. My approach has been to describe passages of epinician poetry in terms of a single dialogue type and occasionally, to detect the presence of multiple dialogues within the same composition. Always erring on the side of under-determination, rather than the strict formalism of earlier Pindaric interpreters, my analysis sketches a wide range of dialogue sub-types within dialogue types. Thus I argued that literary dialogue can be adversative or affirmative; elite dialogue can manage elite concerns or enlist elites alongside non-elites; communal dialogue can deploy both negative and positive postures in its staging. Still, even granted the complexity of hybrid dialogue, an obvious peril would be to assert dialogue as static or unchanging within the course of a single epinician performance. In other words, if studying enigmatic speech teaches one anything, it is that the terms of a dialogue – its implied meaning, its addressee, and its utterer – can often change very rapidly. And so it is to suggest this kind of mutable dialogue that I offer the following brief analysis.

O 1.1-13 Hybrid Dialogue: Literary, Elite, Communal

As the most well-known of all Pindaric passages, perhaps little can be added that would contribute to our understanding of the first Olympian on a compositional level.¹ But the analysis of the preceding chapters allows us to better understand how exactly the famous priamel encodes enigmatic speech. In what follows, I argue that this *prooimion*, like several others we have seen, deploys enigmatic speech to stage a dialogue. What is unique to this particular example is the kind of hybridity, which changes over the course of the utterance. We shall observe the interaction of all three dialogue types: literary, elite, and communal within the span of thirteen lines.

- ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ, ὃ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ
ἅτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μέγανόρος ἔξοχα πλούτου:
εἰ δ' ἄεθλα γαρύεν
ἔλδεται, φίλον ἦτορ,
5 μηκέθ' ἁλίου σκόπει
ἄλλο θαλπνότερον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ φαεινὸν ἄστρον ἐρήμας δι' αἰθέρος,
μηδ' Ὀλυμπίας ἀγῶνα φέρτερον αὐδάσομεν:
ὅθεν ὁ πολύφατος ὕμνος ἀμφιβάλλεται
σοφῶν μητίεσσι, κελαδεῖν
10 Κρόνου παῖδ' ἐς ἀφνεῖαν ἰκομένους
μάκαιραν Ἰέρωνος ἐστίαν,
θεμιστεῖον ὃς ἀμφέπει σκάπτων ἐν πολυμάλῳ
Σικελίᾳ,

- Best is water, and gold gleaming just like fire
in the night shines preeminent of lordly wealth.
But if you desire to profess contests,
dear heart,
5 look no more to any star
warmer than the sun in the daytime, brilliant through the naked air,
and neither shall we sing a contest finer than Olympia.
From there the far-famed hymn is cast
over the wits of the *sophoi*, that they shout in praise
10 of the child of Kronos, those reaching the bountied,
blessed hearth of Hieron,

¹ For a basic overview of the passage, see Race (1981); Gerber (1982) ad loc; Hubbard (1987) on the myth and Pindaric revisionism.

he who wields the divinely-sanctioned scepter in flock-rich Sicily...

I stipulate that the particular form of enigmatic speech deployed here is the *ti maliston* exchange, which forms the basis of many riddles in the ancient world, as I discussed in the Introduction.² A unique twist is that only the answer to the exchange is represented, thus the speaker responds to an implied “What is best?” by stating “Best is water, but...” This may seem arbitrary: One might reasonably ask what is it that designates this initial line as the answer to a question rather than a normal superlative. After all, Pindaric phrasing often incorporates superlatives into the *prooimion*. I understand two basic reasons why this represents a form of enigmatic speech – first, because it resembles other enigmatic dialogues and second, because of how it stages the process of deliberation, which I have described in this chapter as a feature of communal dialogue.

This sort of “difficult answer” riddle form appears also in more-lengthy, narrativized (and thus closer to epinician) riddling performances, such as the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, which, as I explained in the Introduction, likely has antecedents in Pindar’s time.³ Consider the following passage, which recalls the same question of ultimate value (though not its answer) as the priamel of Olympian 1:

φησὶν οὖν Ἡσίοδος·

υἱὲ Μέλητος, Ὅμηρε, θεῶν ἅπο μήδεα εἰδῶς,
εἴπ’ ἄγε μοι πάμπρωτα τί φέρτατόν ἐστι βροτοῖσιν;

Ὅμηρος·

ἀρχὴν μὲν μὴ φῦναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον,
φύντα δ’ ὅπως ὤκιστα πύλας Αἴδαο περῆσαι. (*Certamen* 74-79)

² See pp. 28-30.

³ See pp. 7-9.

- Hesiod: Homer, son of Meles, inspired with wisdom from heaven, come, tell me first what is best for mortal man?
- Homer: For men on earth 'tis best never to be born at all; or being born, to pass through the gates of Hades with all speed. (trans. Evelyn-White 1964)

The question here asks about the meaning of a general superlative “best” (φέρτατον), and the respondent gives a satisfactory answer by finding synonyms for certain words of the question (βροτοῖσιν = ἐπιχθονίοισιν; φέρτατον = ἄριστον), all the while maintaining the syntax. This allows the respondent (and thus the text) to present an answer as a complete unit of thought, something closer to a proverb than a proper riddle or the one word responses of the Pythagoreans, who also asked *ti maliston* questions in the fifth century BCE. The text and the interlocutors can thus claim the status of *sophos* (in that work, Hesiod calls his competitor here μήδεα εἰδώς). At the same time, to assert an impossible feat (“never being born”) as the “best thing” for mortals raises more questions than it answers, even though such a saying is quite well represented as an ancient kernel of wisdom.⁴

Moreover, like the priamel of Olympian 1, the *Contest* presents the superlative *ariston* as a contingent value with the particle syntax (μὲν...δέ). This similarity in presentation, both in the presentation of the speaker as a *sophos*, and in the contingency of the notion of “best” clarifies, I think, what Race has in mind when he notes there are similarities between priamels and riddles, though of course the underlying logic of the *Contest* passage compared to the Pindaric priamel remains somewhat different.⁵

⁴ See Ch. 1, pp. 51-53, where I discussed the phrase as possibly referenced in the prooimion of Nemean 7.

⁵ Whereas the *Certamen* asserts X, an impossible feat for all mortals, is best, but if not X, then Y; Olympian 1 states X is best but also, inexplicably, Y. In each case, the first statement of best is revealed to be contingent to the list of terms that follows.

The other reason that this utterance ought to be considered enigmatic speech is that its reference is multivalent, and the speaker never expresses preference for one meaning over another. Again, not all “multivalent references” constitute enigmatic speech. However, as we saw with Pythian 11 above and in the *Contest*, the utterance of ambiguous gnomes, when presented as part of a dialogue (more on which below), can indeed represent enigmatic speech.⁶ These utterances foster deliberation in their hearers, a feature which I defined in this chapter as a long-running aspect of enigmatic speech that stages a communal dialogue. Of course, this passage is different from those previous examples because the text here does not perform the act of deliberation. Rather, the text distributes that cognition for others in the epinician community to perform. Such distributed cognition calls to mind the reader-response school of criticism. For example, in his “phenomenological” description of the reading process, Wolfgang Iser uses the visual metaphor of interpretive “gaps” to describe the specific instances in a text which, by virtue of their incompleteness or suggestiveness, invite the reader to bring their own perceptions and ideas in order to complete the meaning of the text.⁷

How would a performance audience have filled in the gaps upon hearing the first line of the *prooimion*? Gerber has usefully collated a list of cognitive responses to the opening priamel, by looking to the plausible reasons given by the commentary tradition for choosing water as “best” (the more traditional interpretation, “because it represents poetry” is 7):⁸

1. Water is the origin of the universe.⁹
2. Water is the most abundant and therefore, most useful thing. (thus Arist. *Rhet.* 1.7.14)¹⁰
3. Water is eternal.

⁶ On P. 11, see above pp. 142-158.

⁷ Iser (1974) 274.

⁸ The list is adapted from Gerber (1982) ad 1.

⁹ Σ O. 1.1d; cf. Σ 1e, which argues that water is the origin of the gods.

¹⁰ Argued by Race (1981), following Gildersleeve (1885) 129.

4. Water is sacred.
5. Water is specifically sacred to Poseidon.
6. Water is geographically important to Hieron's palace at Ortygia, the probable locus of the first performance of the ode.
7. Water represents poetry or poetic inspiration.
8. Water is important for the imagery of the myth told later in the ode.
9. Water is mixed with wine and is part of the festivity of the performance.¹¹

Such an account will never be exhaustive, but these demonstrate a sufficient diversity of possible meanings in order to designate the passage as a site of deliberation. Of these nine, four are ostensibly concerned with the here and now of the initial performance in 476 BCE (5, 6, 7, 9; one could make the case for 8, but to an initial listener this connection would not have been apparent); the other five are generalized and context independent.

Of all these possibilities, the most prominent interpretation in scholarly discussion is perhaps (7), that water here symbolizes poetry, as it does elsewhere in Pindar.¹² Such a reading offers significant merits, as it stays within the bounds of Pindaric usage and gives a metapoetic, unifying meaning to what seem discrete symbols; nevertheless, it has not been accepted by all critics.¹³ The biggest obstacle to such straightforward 1:1 mapping ("water = poetry") is that the Pindaric text is generous in allowing cognitive space for deliberation and even performs this deliberation by defining *ariston* as a contingent value. No specific valences of water are described, and the phrase's initial position, as well as the lack of a verb other than an implied

¹¹ Gerber dismisses outright this last interpretation (originally proposed by Dissen(1830)); I would cautiously suggest the plausibility of the idea, since it equates water with a moderating force, and we know that "the mean is best" (*ariston to metron*) was quoted by Aristotle as a Pythagorean ἄκροσμα. Thus the meaning would be "Insofar as water introduces moderation, it is the best thing."

¹² Finley (1955) 52; Hubbard (1985) 154.

¹³ e.g., Verdenius (1988) 4. "[T]he resemblance between water and poetry does not warrant the assumption that water "stands for" poetry."

copulative, diminishes any contextualization or visualization of the term, such that no one interpretation is validated by the text, but almost all are encouraged.¹⁴

This is not to say that there was not one preferred answer (preferred that is, insofar as it was readily apparent to hearers of ancient epinicia), only that we no longer have direct access to it. Indeed, although ferreting out a single “correct” response may seem a dubious critical move, the possibility of a single appropriate interpretation is strongly suggested by the fact that the speech presentation is similar to the associative word games favored by sages and Pythagoreans, in which the difficult answer grants group membership as a kind of shibboleth.¹⁵ As Walter Burkert notes, within a century after Pindar’s time, Anaximander the Younger had written his *Explanation of Pythagorean Symbola*, which shows that the fascination with riddles of the *ti maliston* form and their answers was in vogue well beforehand.¹⁶ A crucial point, therefore, is that unlike most proper riddles, the difficulty of interpretation regarding such a riddle form is distributed between question and answer. For example, it is likely that for most hearers the answer to the Pythagorean *akousma* “Q: What is the Delphic Oracle? A: The *tetractus*” mystified all who heard it.

So much for the literary and communal dialogues. In the eighth line, the speaker changes the terms of the dialogue by introducing a group of notional interlocutors. This group of *sophoi* embodies the elite group I treated in Chapter 2; but here they are made manifest only *after* the

¹⁴ Thus while Race (1982) 122-124 is correct to understand that water is often praised in Pindar for its sustaining, soothing, and natural qualities, no such qualities are adduced by the speaker here.

¹⁵ For sages Diog. Laert. *VP* 82-83, and see further the relevant section of Schultz’s riddle catalog (1909-1912) entitled “Spruchweisheit und volkstümliche Fragen” (117-121); for Pythagoreans, Burkert (1972) 166-192, who notes (169) the similarities of the Pythagorean ἀκούσματα with the priamel of Olympian 1; also Struck (2004) 97f.

¹⁶ Burkert (1972) 166.

utterance of the enigmatic speech and the staging of deliberation. This designation of *sophoi* shifts the frame of the dialogue from communal and deliberative toward elite and deliberated.

It is perhaps novel (and therefore demands justification) to understand the cognitive notice (“hymn cast over the wits of the *sophoi*” 8-9) as referring to the previous lines. With whom are these lines in conversation with? First, what I take to be the cognitive notice (“hymn cast over the minds of the *sophoi*”) presents significant challenges of interpretation and has thus accrued a long tradition of scholarly comment.¹⁷ Renehan’s suggestion, that we take the phrase as a weaving metaphor, is particularly attractive, especially his idea that *polu-phatos* (“far-famed” 8) would have been heard by some in the audience as *pol-huphatos* “much woven.”¹⁸ This aural device would work similarly to the re-segmentation wordplay I discussed in Olympian 6.¹⁹ Moreover, I previously showed that the description of the Muse *weaving* the chryselephantine crown in Nemean 7 deployed an enigmatic form (kenning/ambiguity) along with soundplay to elicit a cognitive response from the audience.²⁰ Likewise, John Hamilton has pursued the idea of “woven” song in Pindar and in the reception of the poems as a byword of enigmatic discourse.²¹ Thus referring to the content of one’s own speech as “woven” has the indexical function; it signals the staging of enigmatic speech for a group.²²

¹⁷ Beginning with the scholiast, Σ O 1.14e, who opines that this is a “metaphor from weaving.”

¹⁸ Renehan (1977) 221; on weaving metaphors for poetry generally see West (2007) 36-38. With regards to weaving and enigmatic speech, see Berra (2008) 248-250.

¹⁹ See Ch. 2 pp. 98-101,

²⁰ See Ch. 1 pp. 63-68.

²¹ Hamilton (2003) 77-96.

²² This is all to say that the phrase “hymn cast over the wits of the *sophoi*” extends a non-physical or even metaphorical sense, and it is this latitude that is necessary to interpret a reference to the poem itself. Though Nisetich (1975) 65-68 purports in his analysis to investigate the metaphorical aspects of the phrase, he ends up over-privileging the literal sense of “crowning a victor.” In fact, Pindar does not here explicitly refer to an actual coronation, and that is certainly not because epinician poetry lacks the vocabulary for doing so. We are thus better served in following Renehan’s recommendation of “conscious ambiguity,” with the proviso that such a reading allows the possibility of Nisetich’s “crown” imagery; it simply does not state it outright.

The speaker's description of praise here conveys a localized meaning: the celebration of Zeus at his Olympian sanctuary, which is described as "rich" (ἄφνεάν 10). This acknowledgment of wealth is further strengthened by the utterance of two symbols of the Syracusan tyrant (the hearth and scepter of Hieron 11-12). This language serves to further define and delineate the previous, general reference to wealth in the opening priamel, where the speaker had initially referenced "lordly wealth" in comparison with the sun (διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μέγανος ἔξοχα πλούτου 2). Moreover, Leslie Kurke has noticed a wordplay here (διαπρέπει...μεγάνος) on the aristocratic value of *megaloprepeia*.²³ Such a play would suit the elite concern about the proper expenditure of wealth, which I discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to Bacchylides 3. The sequence of wordplay followed by repetition of imagery suggesting the play shows the text moving from a deliberative to a deliberated posture. The speaker of Olympian 1, who had previously offered the priamel as a site of deliberation, now, like the community at the Syracusan performance, is defined absolutely by his relationship to Hieron, as one of the *sophoi* involved in transmitting the "far-flung" hymn. Thus by the end of the prooimion, the speaker offers elite dialogue in response to communal dialogue and one kind enigmatic speech, perhaps inevitably, talks to another.

²³ Kurke (1991) 182-183.

Appendix: Wordplay in Pindar

The following table organizes all instances of wordplay that I have come across during this project. The “Wordplay Type” column adopts the categories of O’Hara (1996) in describing Vergilian wordplay, as I discuss in Chapter 1 above.

Abbreviations. B = Barkhuizen (1975); Adorjáni = Adorjáni (2013), which contains a list of wordplays at p 361 n4. The other references can be found in the bibliography. “Dub.” indicates my own judgment that the wordplay ascribed is “dubious.” “Field” gives a general sense of the wordplay target, though this designation is necessarily broad.

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
O. 1	1. Οἰνομάου (88)...μεμαότας (89) 2. κράτει ... προσέμειξε δεσπότην (22) (= Pherenikos)	1. paronomasia 2. etymologizing	1. B 15-16 2. Adorjáni	1. Text is uncertain; unclear what the signifiacnce of such a similarity in sound would be.	1. Myth 2. Victor’s Horse
O. 2	1. ἀκρόθινα (4)...Ἀκράγαντας (6) 2. Κρόνιε (12)... χρόνός ὁ <u>πάντων</u> πατήρ (17)... πόσις ὁ <u>πάντων</u> Ῥέας (77) (= Kronos) 3. λάθα (18) (=Lethe) 4. βρόμῳ (25) (=Bromius) 5. Μοῖρ’ (35)...μόριμος (39) 6. πλοῦτος (53) (= Pluto) 7. ἀγροτέρων (54) (=Theron) 8. ἄνθεμα (71)...Ῥαδάμανθυς (75) (also, μαθών) 9. Ἑκτορα (81)...κίονα (82) 10. ἄκραντα (87)...Ἀκραγάντι (91) 11. κόρακες (88) (= Korax) 12. Πᾶν Λόγος (85...92);	1. paronomasia 2. paronomasia 3. etymologizing, suppression 4. etymologizing, suppression 5. paronomasia 6. etymologizing, suppression 7. etymologizing, suppression 8. paronomasia 9. etymologizing 10. paronomasia 11. etymologizing, suppression 12. etymologizing, suppression 13. etymologizing, suppression 14.	1. B 93 2. B 29; Hamilton (2003) 195-198; Ch. 2 110-112. 3. 94-95 4. B 17 5. B 17-18 6. B 18-19 7. B 19-20 8. B 25-26 9. B 28-29 10. B 94 11. B 29-31; Verrall	1. Dub., since there is very little linking the two words in sense or sound. 2. The underlined terms constitute a tautometric responsion. 3. Unconvincing without positing an Orphic subtext 10. Too much space between terms for paronomasia. 12. Dub. 13. Victor’s father 14. Doubted by B.	1. Place 2. Divine Name 3. Place / Myth 4. Divine Name / Myth 5. Divine Name 6. Divine Name 7. Victor / Clan 8. Myth 9. Myth 10. Place 11. Historical Person 12. Divine Name 13.

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
	Ἑρμας Νοῦς (85...92) 13. αἶνον (95) (= Ainesidamos) 14. μάργων (96) (=Margites)	etymologizing, Suppression	(1880) 12. B 31-33 13. B 33-34 14. B 34-35		Victor/Clan 14. Myth
O. 3	1. Αἰτωλος (12) ...αἶται (17) 2. πνοιαῖς ὄπιθεν Βορέα ψυχροῦ (31-32) (=Hyperboreans)	1. paronomasia 2. etymologizing	1. B 34 - 35; Bury 2. Adorján i	1. Doubted even by B.	1. Myth 2. Myth
O. 6	1. Σωστράτου (9) ...στρατιάς ὀφθαλμὸν (16) 2. Ἀμφιάρηον (13)...ἀμφοτέρων μάντιν τ' ἀγαθὸν καὶ δουρὶ μάρνασθαι (16-17) 3. ἀγεμονεῦσαι (24) (=Hagesias) 4. χρῆ τοίνυν πύλας ὕμνων <u>ἀναπιτνάμεν</u> αὐταῖς· πρὸς Πιτάναν δὲ (27-28) 5. ἰόπλοκον (46)...ἰῶ (47)...ἰων (55)...τοῦτ' ὄνυμ' (57) (=Ἰαμος) 6. λαοτρόφον <u>τιμάν τιν'</u> (60) (= <i>mantis</i>) 7. Μοῖσᾶν (91)...μεμνᾶσθαι (92)	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing 3. etymologizing, suppression 4. paronomasia 5. etymologizing and paronomasia 6. etymologizing 7. etymologizing	1. B 35 2. B 35-36 3. Griffith (2006) 341 n101 4. B 95-96 5. B 37-38, Ch. 2, pp. 91-97. 6. Ch. 2, pp. 98-103 7. B 38-39	5.-6. See the discussion in Ch. 2. 89-104.	1. Victor/Clan 2. Myth 3. Place 4. Myth 5. Divine Name
O. 7	1. προμαθέος (44) (=Prometheus) 2. λάχος (58)...Λάχεσις (64) 3. <u>βλάστε</u> μὲν ἐξ ἁλὸς	1. etymologizing, suppression 2. etymologizing 3. etymologizing	1. B 42-44; 2. B 45 3. B 96-97;	3. The verb βλάστε suggests the narrator is relating the common etymology of the	1. Divine Name/Myth 2. Divine Name/

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
	ὕγρας / νᾶσος (69-70) (=Ῥόδος / ῥόδος)			island's name: "rose."	Myth 3. Place
O. 8	Τιμοσθένης (15)...Ἀλκιμέδοντα (17)... Ἰφίων (81)...Καλλίμαχῳ (82)	etymologizing	B 46-47	Dub: These fairly names have similar martial connotations, but nothing is marked about their presentation	Victor/Clan
O. 9	1. Πρωτογενείας (41)...πρωτόν (44)...γόνον (45) 2. Διὸς (42)...Δευκαλίων (43)	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing	1. B 47; Woodhead; Adorján i 2. B 47- 48; Bury	2. Dub.	1. Myth 2. Divine Name/ Myth
O. 10	1. ἐπιλέλαθ' (3)...Ἀλάθεια(4) 2. Ἡρακλέα (16)...Πάτροκλος (19)...κλέος (21) 3. ζᾷθεον ἄλσος...Ἄλτιν (44-45) 4. Κρόνου (50)...Χρόνος (55) 5. νικαφορίασι (59)...Νικεὺς (72)...νίκας (79)	1. paronomasia 2. etymologizing 3. etymologizing, foreign word gloss 4. etymologizing 5. etymologizing	1. B 48- 51 2. B 52- 53 3. B 97- 98 5. B 57- 58	2. Dub. 3. The first noun- adjective pair glosses the proper place name in the following line. According to Pais V.10.1, Ἄλτις was the local Elean name for ἄλσος. 4. cf. O. 2.12, 17, 77 5. Dub., distance between words too great.	1. Divine Name 2. Myth 3. Place 4. Divine Name 5. Myth
O. 11	ἀρχὰ (5) ...Ἀρχεστράτου (11) ... στρατον (17)	etymologizing	B 59	Dub.: Archestratus is the victor's father. This wordplay is to diffuse to be effective or plausible, but	Victor/Clan

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
				compare O. 6 #1 above.	
O. 12	1. Φιλάνορος (13)...ἀντιάνειρα (16) 2. νῦν δ' Ὀλυμπία στεφανωσάμενος / καὶ δις ἐκ Πυθῶνος Ἴσθμοῖ τ', Ἐργότελες (17-18)	1. etymologizing, <i>kat'antiphrasin</i> 2. etymologizing	1. B 60 2. Ch. 3, pp. 129-132.	1. Dub., especially given the distance between the words.	1. Victor/Clan 2. Victor/Clan
O. 13	1. Σίσυφον μὲν πυκνότατον παλάμαις ὥς θεόν (52) 2. μῆτιν (50)...Μῆδειαν (53) 3. Δαμαίῳ (69)...δαμασίφρονα (78) 4. ἵππειον (68) Ἴππία (Athena 82) ἵππον (86)	1. etymologizing, single adjective gloss (Σίσυφος = σιός σοφός) 2. etymologizing 3. etymologizing 4. etymologizing	1. B 60-61 2. B 60-61 3. B 62-63 4. B 63	1. Dub., because B.'s argument that there is etymologizing relies on Pindar having in mind the archaic Doricism σιός, which does not occur elsewhere in the corpus. 3.-4. Dub.: The cult name "Hippia" is transferred from its usual bearer, Poseidon, to Athena, but there is nothing playful about the deployment of horse vocabulary here.	1. Divine Name 2. Myth 3. Divine Name 4. Divine Name
O. 14	1. κλυτὰν (20)...Κλεόδαμον (21) 2. ἀγλαὸς ἀνὴρ (7)...Χαρίτων (8)...πότνι' Ἀγλαία (13) 3. δόμον Φερσεφόνας ...Ἀχοῖ... φέροισ' ἀγγελίαν (21)	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing 3. etymologizing	1. B 53-54 2. B 63 3. B 64	2. Dub., because of distance. 3. I would add that the invocation of Echo signals the wordplay.	1. Victor/Clan 2. Divine Name 3. Myth
P. 1	1. Ἡρακλεῖδαι (62)...κλέος (66) 2. αἰεὶ μένειν (67) ...Ἀμένα (67)	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing	1. B 54-55 2. B 98-99		1. Myth 2. Place

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
P. 2	1. <u>ιερέα</u> (=Hieron) <u>κτίλον</u> <u>Ἀφροδίτας</u> (17) 2. <u>ποτὶ καὶ τὸν ἴκοντ'</u> (=Ixion) (36) 3. <u>μαθών</u> (72)... <u>Ῥαδάμανθους</u> (73) 4. <u>καλός τοι πίθων</u> (72) ... <u>καλὸς</u> (73) (= <u>καλλίας</u> "Ἀπε")	1. etymologizing, suppression 2. etymologizing, suppression 3. etymologizing 4. etymologizing, suppression	1. B 64- 65; Bury; 2. B 65- 66; Donalds on (1841) 109; Rank (1951) 3. B 26- 28 4. Verdeni us (1959); Intr., 22-23.	1. cf. fr. 94b; here the antecedent is Kinuras, the positive exemplum of mortal-divine relations in this ode. 2. cf. Asech. <i>Eum.</i> 441	1. Victor/ Clan 2. Myth 3. Myth 4. Animal
P. 3	1. <u>ἄμερον</u> ... <u>Ἀσκλήπιον</u> (6) 2. <u>ὑποκουρίζεσθ'</u> (=Coronis/Κορωνίς 25) 3. <u>Λοξίας</u> , <u>κοινᾶν παρ'</u> <u>ἐὐθυτάτω</u> <u>γνώμαν</u> <u>πιθών</u> (28)... 4. <u>Ἀπόλλων</u> (40) ... <u>ὀλέσαι</u> (41)	1. etymologizing, single adjective gloss 2. etymologizing, suppression 3. etymologizing, <i>kat'antiphrasin</i> 4. etymologizing	1. B 66- 67 2. B 68- 69; Schroeder (1922); Σ P 32c 3. B 67- 68 4. B 69- 71	1. (<u>ἄμερος</u> = <u>ἥπιος</u>) 2. Dub., though the subject of the infinitive is Coronis and this appears to be the earliest occurrence of the word in Greek literature. Schroeder and others see a reference to the popular wedding song which starts with a command to "drive away the crow." 4. Unlikely, since the verb form is quite dissimilar from the god's name and the context would necessitate an etymology	1. Divine Name 2. Myth 3. Divine Name 4. Divine Name

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
				<i>kat'antiphrasin</i> : that is, that Apollo is the god who does not destroy, which would be contrary to popular etymologizing elsewhere (e.g., Aesch. Ag. 1080)	
P. 4	1. πολυχρύσω (53)... ἀμνάσει (54) ...υἱὲ Πολυμνάστου (59) 2. με γηραιὸν μέρος ἀλικίας / ἀμφιπολεῖ (157-8) (= Pelias, <i>loquens</i>) 3. κλέος (174)... Εὐφάμου...Περικλύμεν' (175) 4. ἐπὶ καὶ θανάτῳ/ φάρμακον κάλλιστον ἔαζ ἀρετᾶς (186-7 (Iason = <i>iatros</i>) 5. Δαμοφίλου (281) (= "friend to his people")	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing, suppression 3. paronomasia 4. etymologizing 5. etymologizing	1. B 71-72 2. B 55; Adorján i 3. Adorján i 4. Braswell ad 270 5. Lattman n (2010) 233 n229.	1. On the one hand, the distance between play and referent is not particularly close. On the other, this play frames the Delphic consultation episode of Battus, a dynamic similar to that of Iamus discussed in Ch. 1. 4. Dub., acc. to Braswell. 5. Suggested by context, which praises D.'s civic virtues.	1. Myth 2. Myth 3. Myth 4. Myth 5. Real Person
P. 5	ὃς οὐ τὰν Ἐπιμαθέος ἄγων ὀψινόου τυγατέρα Πρόφασιν (27-28)	etymologizing , single adjective gloss	B 72-73	cf. Hes. WD 85-89	Divine Name
P. 6	ἀναμείναις (31)...Μέμνονα (32)...μένων (38)	paronomasia		The participles refer to Antilochus	Myth
P. 8	1. Κλειτομάχου (37) = Ὀικλέος (39) 2. Ἀριστομένει (5)...δυσμενέων (10)... εὐμενεῖ (18)	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing	1. B 55 2. B 74-75	1. Dub., as the meanings of these names are not identical, and they are dissimilar in form and sound. 2. Dub.: distance	1. Victor/ Clan 2. Victor/ Clan

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
				between these is too great to be meaningful, and the context suggests no readily discernible thematic link among the three.	
P. 10	κλυτὰν ὄπα (6) (=Hippocleas)		B 52		Victor/Clan
N. 1	1. Μοῖσα μεμνᾶσθαι φιλεῖ (11) 2. χρόνος (46; χρόμος em. Schmidt) (=Χρόμιος)	1. etymologizing 2. paronomasia, suppression	1. B 38-39 2. B 76-77; Bury	2. Dub.: The emendation in favor of such a rare word is suspect; the argument for the meaning of the suggestion of the victor's name is unconvincing.	1. Divine Name 2. Victor/ Clan
N. 2	ἔστι δ' εὐκλὸς / ὀρεῖᾶν γε Πελειάδων/ μὴ τηλόθεν Ὀαρίωνα νεῖσθαι (10-12)	etymologizing	B 77-79	On the one hand, the ὀρεῖᾶν is sonically rather different than the name Ὀαρίωνα; on the other, the syntax of the line suggests the speaker is calling attention to the similarity, and thus the origin of the proper name.	Myth
N. 3	1. Ἡρακλέος (21) ... ἥρωος (22)...ἐσχάτας...κλυτάς (22, 23) 2. βοᾷ δὲ νικαφόρῳ σὺν Ἀριστοκλείδῃ πρέπει / ὅς τάνδε νᾶσον εὐκλέει προσέθηκε λόγῳ (67-68) 3. κραγέται (=Acragas) δὲ κολοιοὶ ταπεινὰ νέμονται (82) 4. τὴν γε μὲν, εὐθρόνου	1. etymologizing 2. paronomasia 3. paronomasia, suppression 4. paronomasia, suppression	1. B 56 2. B 55-56 3. B 93-94; Bury 4. B. 55-56; Bury	1. B. notes assonance with ἥρωος 2. Aristocleides is the victor. 3. Dub.: as B notes there is no connection with the Sicilian city in this ode, even if the verb is a Pindaric	1. Myth 2. Victor/Clan 3. Place 4. Victor/ clan

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
	Κλεοῦς ἐθελοΐσας (83) (=Aristocleides)			coinage, as Bury asserts.	
N. 5	1. αἰετοί (22) (=Ajax) 2. Θεμίστιον (50) ...ἰστία τεῖνον (51)	1. paronomasia, suppression 2. paronomasia	1. B 89-90 2. Adorján i	1. Dub.: the context of this image is in a description of the glories of the Aeacids, but no specific reference is made to Ajax, and the image of the eagle is often (as here) a symbol for the poet-narrator's ability.	Myth
N. 6	1. Ἀγησιμάχοι' (22)... σὺν θεοῦ δὲ τύχα ἕτερον οὐ τίνα οἶκον ἀπεφάνατο πυγμαχία(<πλεόνων> ταμίαν στεφάνων (24-27) 2. Ἀιακίδαι (46)... αἶσαν (47) ... πέταται (48) ...ὄνυμ' αὐτῶν (49).	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing and paronomasia	1. B 79-80 2. B 90	2. Dub.: reference is made here to the Aeacid name "flying," which could seem to play on the pun Ajax= αἰετός (cf. I.6). Yet the idea of a name or reputation flying is not a particularly unique expression of thought.	1. Victor/Clan 2. Myth
N. 7	1. Ἐλεΐθια (1)... γενέτετρα (2)...Σωγένης (8) 2. εὐώνυμον ἐς δίκαν τρία ἔπεα διαρκέσει (48) 3. ξεῖνος εἰμι (61)...προξενία πέποιθ' (65)...Εὐξενίδα πάτραθε Σωγένης (70) 4. Μοῖσα (77)...μεμναμένος (80) 5. ἐλαφρόν· ἀναβάλεο (77) ...ἐλέφανθ' ἅμα (78) 6. ἀτρόποισι Νεοπτόλεμον ἐλκύσαι ἔπεσι· ταῦτά δὲ <u>τρις</u>	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing 3. etymologizing 4. etymologizing 5. paronomasia 6. etymologizing	1. B 39-40; B 81-83; Bury; Ch. 1, pp. 51-55 2. Ch. 1, pp. 60-62 3. B 83-84; Bury 4. Ch. 1, pp. 67-68	See full discussion in Ch. 1.	1. Victor/Clan 2. Divine Name 3. Victor/Clan 4. Divine Name 5. Poetic Performance 6. Myth

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
	τετράκι τ' ἀμπολεῖν ἀπορία τελέθει...(103-105)		5. Ch. 1, p. 67 6. Ch. 1, pp. 69-76		
N. 9	φοινικοστόλων ἐγγέων (28-29) (=Carthaginian spears/ <i>Septem</i> spears)	etymologizing, suppression	1. B 84-85; Bury; Woodhead	The historical reference is possible (the ode is thought by some to have been written shortly after the Sicilian victory over Carthage in 480), but the context is that of the <i>Septem</i> myth, which had just been narrated.	Myth
N. 10	λαιψηροῖς δὲ πόδεσσι ἄφαρ (63)... ὠκέως (64) ... Ἀφαρητίδαι (65)	etymologizing, adjective and adverb gloss	B 86		Victor/Clan
N. 11	ἐν λόγοις δ' ἀστῶν ἀγαθοῖσι νιν αἰνεῖσθαι χρεών, καὶ μελιγδούποισι δαιδαλθέντα μελιζέμεν ᾠοῖδαις, ἐκ δὲ περικτιόνων ἔκκαίδεκ' Ἀρισταγόραν [ἔστεφάνωσαν] (17-19)	etymologizing	B 86-87; Ch. 3, pp. 132-134		Victor/Clan
I. 2	1. Νικόμαχος (22)...ἐν γούνασιν πιτνόντα Νίκας (26) 2. Ξεινοκράτης (36)...ξενίαν (39)	1. paronomasia, suppression 2. etymologizing	1. B 58 2. B 84; Bury	1. The participle πιτνόντα adjacent to Νίκας refers to Nicomachus. 2. The syntax of this line (39) assigns xenia to the table of Xenocrates.	1. Victor/Clan 2. Victor/Clan

Ode	Wordplay	Wordplay Type	Citation	Comments	Field
I. 3/4	εὐκλέων (7)...Κλεωνύμου (15)	etymologizing	B 56-57	Dub.: This seems too great a distance between the words to be meaningful.	1. Victor/ Clan
I. 5	1. 1. Θεία (1) ...θαυμασταὶ (6) 2. καλλίνικον (5f4)...Κλεονίκου (55)	1. etymologizing 2. paronomasia	1. B 88-89 2. B 59;	1. The argument is that the invocation to Theia etymologizes her name with the verb of sight θεάομαι and its related form ...θαυμασταὶ, as the prooimion lists visual phenomena such as gold as the product of her activity.	1. Divine Name 2. Victor/ Clan
I. 6	αἰετόν (50)...ὄν αἰτεῖς (52)...ἐπόνυμον εὐρυβίαν Αἴαντα (53)	etymologizing	B 89-90		Myth
I. 7	ἀμνάμονες (16)...Μοίσαις (23)	etymologizing	1. B 40		Divine Name
I. 8	1. Μοισαῖον (62)...μνᾶμα (63) 2. Νικοκλέος (62)...ἐνίκασε (65)	1. etymologizing 2. etymologizing	1. B 40 2. B 59		1. Divine Name 2. Victor/ Clan

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